

L.M. MONTGOMERY



THE
BLYTHES
ARE
QUOTED

The rediscovered last work of L.M. Montgomery
Edited by Benjamin Lefebvre

THE
BLYTHES
ARE
QUOTED

L.M. MONTGOMERY

THE
BLYTHES
ARE
QUOTED

Edited and with an
Afterword by
Benjamin Lefebvre

Foreword by
Elizabeth Rollins Epperly



VIKING CANADA

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario,
Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Canada Inc.)

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A.

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,
New Delhi – 110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore 0632, New Zealand
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg 2196,
South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

First published 2009

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (RRD)

Text by L.M. Montgomery and Afterword copyright © 2009 David Macdonald, trustee,
and Ruth Macdonald and Benjamin Lefebvre

Foreword copyright © 2009 Elizabeth Rollins Epperly

L.M. Montgomery and *L.M. Montgomery's signature and cat design* are trademarks of
Heirs of L.M. Montgomery Inc.

Anne of Green Gables and other indicia of "Anne" are trademarks and Canadian official marks of
the

Anne of Green Gables Licensing Authority Inc.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this
publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted
in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise),
without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this
book.

*Publisher's note: This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either
are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to
actual persons living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.*

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Montgomery, L. M. (Lucy Maud), 1874–1942

The Blythes are quoted / L.M. Montgomery ; edited
and with an afterword by Benjamin Lefebvre ;
foreword by Elizabeth Rollins Epperly.

ISBN 978-0-670-06391-8

I. Lefebvre, Benjamin, 1977– II. Title.

PS8526.O55B58 2009 C813'.52 C2009-903955-9

Visit the Penguin Group (Canada) website at www.penguin.ca

Special and corporate bulk purchase rates available; please see
www.penguin.ca/corporatesales or call 1-800-810-3104, ext. 477 or 474

CONTENTS

Foreword by Elizabeth Rollins Epperly ~

~ PART ONE ~

“The Piper” ~

Some Fools and a Saint ~

Twilight at Ingleside ~

“I Wish You” ~

“The Old Path Round the Shore” ~

“Guest Room in the Country” ~

An Afternoon with Mr. Jenkins ~

The Second Evening ~

“The New House” ~

“Robin Vespers” ~

“Night” ~

“Man and Woman” ~

Retribution ~

The Third Evening ~

“There Is a House I Love” ~

“Sea Song” ~

The Twins Pretend ~

The Fourth Evening ~

“To a Desired Friend” ~

Fancy’s Fool ~

The Fifth Evening ~

“Midsummer Day” ~

“Remembered” ~

A Dream Comes True ~

The Sixth Evening ~

“Farewell to an Old Room” ~

“The Haunted Room” ~

“Song of Winter” ~

Penelope Struts Her Theories ~

The Seventh Evening ~

“Success” ~

“The Gate of Dream” ~

“An Old Face” ~

The Reconciliation ~

The Cheated Child ~

Fool’s Errand ~

The Pot and the Kettle ~

~ PART TWO ~

Another Ingleside Twilight ~

“Interlude” ~

“Come, Let Us Go” ~

“A June Day” ~

“Wind of Autumn ~

“The Wild Places” ~

“For Its Own Sake” ~

“The Change” ~

“I Know” ~

Brother Beware ~

The Second Evening ~

“The Wind” ~

“The Bride Dreams” ~

“May Song” ~

Here Comes the Bride ~

The Third Evening ~

“The Parting Soul” ~

“My House” ~

“Memories” ~

A Commonplace Woman ~

The Fourth Evening ~

“Canadian Twilight” ~

“Oh, We Will Walk with Spring Today” ~

“Grief” ~

“The Room” ~

The Road to Yesterday ~

Au Revoir ~

“I Want” ~

“The Pilgrim” ~

“Spring Song” ~

“The Aftermath” ~

Afterword by Benjamin Lefebvre ~

A Note on the Text ~

Acknowledgments ~

Books by L.M. Montgomery ~

FOREWORD

by Elizabeth Rollins Epperly

Even for those who know and love L.M. Montgomery's twenty other novels, hundreds of short stories and poems, diaries, letters, and scrapbooks, this first-time publication of the full text of *The Blythes Are Quoted* will bring sharp surprises. It may be a fractured work, even full of splinters, but I am drawn through its parts and pieces by Montgomery's power to make me care.

The Blythes Are Quoted is the last work of fiction the world-famous author of *Anne of Green Gables* prepared for publication before her untimely death on April 24, 1942. It has never before been published in its entirety. Why? The publishing history of *The Blythes Are Quoted* involves mystery; the very appearance of the current volume is a triumph of several kinds.

Until now, the full text of *The Blythes Are Quoted* has remained something of a secret, and largely enigmatic. The typescript was delivered to Montgomery's publisher on the day she died—by whom we do not know; Montgomery evidently intended it for publication, since it is amended in her hand-writing. The collection is mentioned in her obituary in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper (see Afterword for details), but for many years it never appeared. The frame story takes Anne Shirley Blythe and her family a full two decades beyond anything else Montgomery published about them. Surely her publishers would have been delighted to issue a book that took Anne right up to the current day? It wasn't until 1974 that another publisher decided to bring the book out, but not before changing the title and recasting the work completely. The typescript they used lacked the longest story, "Some Fools and a Saint," and they stripped out all but one of the original forty-one poems and all the interconnecting

vignettes featuring Anne and family, and then rearranged the remaining stories as though the book had been intended to be merely another volume of short fiction. Editors in 1942 and 1974 were evidently troubled by aspects of the book; what disturbed them may be precisely what will intrigue readers today.

Was the book deliberately suppressed as too volatile? The world was aflame with war at the time of Montgomery's death. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the Americans had joined the Allies, and by the spring of 1942, the whole globe must have seemed locked in a death grapple, the very kind Montgomery had perceived in the First World War. She had described the Great War with patriotic ardour in *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921), the last of the original Anne series. The two Anne novels written during the war itself, *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917) and *Rainbow Valley* (1919), were meant to hearten the home front and the trenches with images of the sacred beauty of home, a home imperilled by war. *The Blythes Are Quoted* does not applaud war; its poetry and interludes—the very shape of the book—call war and its rhetoric into question.

Perhaps her publishers in 1942 were unwilling to tamper with Montgomery's text but could also not countenance publishing a work framed to address war. Montgomery introduced and ended the book with war pieces, and she divided the collection into two parts, with the First World War as its pivotal point. She linked the two world wars at the very outset of the book by leading with her poem "The Piper." Probably inspired at the time Montgomery wrote *Rilla of Ingleside* by John McRae's "In Flanders Fields," Walter's "Piper" became famous overnight and symbolized the war effort within the story but was never produced in the novel itself. Montgomery explains in an authorial note in *The Blythes* that she had only recently written the poem, believing it even more appropriate for "now" (the Second World War) than earlier (in the First World War). A lacklustre lyric, Montgomery's "Piper" is also a tepid endorsement of war. Its weakness is underscored by the fact that the volume ends with another war poem, also by Walter, but "The Aftermath" is a gripping, agonizing piece in the manner of Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon. Walter's last poem is followed by a final dialogue between Anne and her son Jem, now himself the father of sons ready to go to war. In one

line, Anne delivers a scorching indictment of the First World War, if not the Second.

In 1974, whether or not the editors were perturbed by the war references, they were certainly disturbed by the book's shape. Their solution was to cut out the frame story entirely and to eliminate many of the remaining stories' references to war. Montgomery had created a two-part text, with Part One set before the First World War and Part Two beginning after that war and concluding after the start of the Second World War. Interspersed through each part were short vignettes or dialogues, evenings where Anne reads poetry aloud to various family members and they briefly comment. Between the vignettes, and sometimes in provocative relationship to them, Montgomery placed the short stories, singly or in groups. Each story contains references to, quotations from, or even brief appearances by one or more of the Blythe family members. The poems and dialogues capture intimate moments with the Blythe family, and the stories offer glimpses of them within a larger surrounding community. The 1974 editors retained the internal story references to the Blythes but removed the context in which the use of the Blythes as a touchstone makes sense. Instead, the 1974 editors hoped for shock value. They made their collection of stories begin and end with themes they hoped might startle readers who may have come to accept as true the modernist debunking of Montgomery as a sunny, one-song warbler. Beginning the book with "An Afternoon with Mr. Jenkins," about a man newly released from prison and his encounter with a son who does not know him, and ending with "A Commonplace Woman," involving a dying woman's satisfied recollection of an undetected murder, the 1974 editors replaced Montgomery's controversial war framework with a controversial arrangement of their own.

However the earlier editors estimated the reading public and undervalued the full text of *The Blythes Are Quoted*, we are left—even with this full-text version—with a fascinating mystery: what did Montgomery intend *The Blythes Are Quoted* to show and to question? Why did she choose these stories and poems from among her hundreds and arrange them, with interludes, in this precise order?

Perhaps we are meant to feel Montgomery's resistance to easy answers. No one who reads the poetry here and explores the stories' carefully

patterned alternations between the optimistic and the harsh is going to mistake this book for an easy endorsement of anything—whether it is war or romance. The two halves of the book comment on each other, and the stories, poems, and dialogues invite questions throughout about what lasts, what is inevitable, and what must change. Poems by the grieving mother Anne Blythe stand in stark contrast to her own early cheerful lyrics and those of Walter. We see how Anne’s poetry influenced Walter’s, and there is even one poem about mortality that Walter began and Anne has finished years after his death. Gilbert makes a comment, early in Part One, about memory and the need to forget; Jem quotes this comment at the book’s end, thinking about his own son. What is Montgomery saying about what is passed from one generation to another? It would have been easy to suggest that the world changed forever after the First World War, but the persistence of vision and themes in this novel, from one war to another, belies that view.

Perhaps by undercutting and alternating perspectives, Montgomery was also defying critics of her work—modernist or anti-Victorian and anti-Edwardian—who continued to misread her as some predictable, pre-war, naive romantic with only one way of writing. Belonging to the same often starkly realistic vision that created *Anne of Ingleside* (1939), *The Blythes Are Quoted* will stir up discussion and debate and deserves to take its rightful place in Montgomery’s list of works. There are now nine Anne books, not eight.

Montgomery makes her readers care about her characters, the world they inhabit, and our world in relationship to theirs. She attained world fame in her own lifetime (1874–1942) and has since been translated into more than thirty languages. Her fame is spreading to new audiences as more of her works are published for the first time and more is uncovered about her own life and thinking. The five published volumes of her diaries, her letters to two male pen-friends, her scrap-books that constitute visual autobiography—all of these works fuel biographies and incite debates over the complex interior life of one of the world’s best-loved authors. The intricate intertwining of ideas in *The Blythes Are Quoted* will add new material for the consideration of Montgomery’s life work.

The publication of the full text of *The Blythes Are Quoted* is a triumph of good sense and respectful high-mindedness on the part of Penguin

Canada, and of scholarly persistence by Benjamin Lefebvre. Perhaps Montgomery intended this last story of Anne to be her farewell letter to a world she knew she was leaving soon. Perhaps this is why so many of the pieces are preoccupied with finding, feeling, and speaking truth and why Montgomery is at pains to show there is seldom one truth only. Montgomery the artist triumphs in shaping this final book: there is no easy closure for Anne's story, and we care how and why this is so.

Elizabeth Rollins Epperly, Ph.D., is professor emerita of English at the University of Prince Edward Island and the founding chair of the L.M. Montgomery Institute. An internationally recognized scholar, she is the author of numerous articles and books on Montgomery, the most recent being Imagining Anne: The Island Scrapbooks of L.M. Montgomery

The first half of this book deals with life before the First World War.

The second part deals with it after the war.

~ Part One ~

In my books *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside*, a poem is mentioned, "The Piper," supposed to have been written and published by Walter Blythe before his death in the First World War. Although the poem had no real existence many people have written me, asking me where they could get it. It has been written recently, but seems even more appropriate now than then.

THE PIPER

*One day the Piper came down the Glen ...
Sweet and long and low played he!
The children followed from door to door,
No matter how those who loved might implore,
So wiling the song of his melody
As the song of a woodland rill.*

*Some day the Piper will come again
To pipe to the sons of the maple tree!
You and I will follow from door to door,
Many of us will come back no more ...
What matter that if Freedom still
Be the crown of each native hill?*

Some Fools and a Saint

“You are going to board at Long Alec’s!” exclaimed Mr. Sheldon in amazement.

The old minister of the Methodist Mowbray Narrows congregation and the new minister were in the little church classroom. The old minister ... who was retiring ... had looked kindly at the new minister ... kindly and rather wistfully. This boy was so like what he had been himself forty years before ... young, enthusiastic, full of hope, energy and high purpose. Good-looking, too. Mr. Sheldon smiled a bit in the back of his mind and wondered if Curtis Burns were engaged. Probably. Most young ministers were. If not, there would be some fluttering in the girlish hearts of Mowbray Narrows. And small blame to them.

The reception had been held in the afternoon and had been followed by a supper in the basement. Curtis Burns had met the most of his people and shaken hands with them. He was feeling a little confused and bewildered and rather glad to find himself in the vine-shaded classroom with old Mr. Sheldon, his saintly predecessor, who had decided to spend the rest of his days in Glen St. Mary, the neighbouring settlement. People said it was because he felt he could not get along without Dr. Gilbert Blythe of Ingleside. Some of the older Methodists said it disapprovingly. They had always thought he ought to patronize the Methodist doctor of Lowbridge.

“You have a good church and a loyal people here, Mr. Burns,” Mr. Sheldon was saying. “I hope your ministry among them will be happy and blessed.”

Curtis Burns smiled. When he smiled his cheeks dimpled, which gave him a boyish, irresponsible look. Mr. Sheldon felt a momentary doubt. He could not recall any minister of his acquaintance with dimples, not even a

Presbyterian one. Was it fitting? But Curtis Burns was saying, with just the right shade of diffidence and modesty, "I am sure it will be my own fault, Mr. Sheldon, if it is not. I feel my lack of experience. May I draw on you occasionally for advice and help?"

"I shall be very glad to give you any assistance in my power," said Mr. Sheldon, his doubts promptly disappearing. "As for advice bushels of it are at your disposal. I shall hand you out a piece at once. If you need a doctor always send for the Methodist one. *I* got in very wrong through my friendship with Dr. Blythe. And go into the parsonage ... don't board."

Curtis shook his brown head ruefully.

"I can't ... Mr. Sheldon ... not right away. I haven't a cent ... and I have some borrowed money to repay. I'll have to wait until I have paid my debts and saved enough money to pay for a housekeeper."

So he was not contemplating matrimony.

"Oh, well, of course if you can't, you can't. But do it as soon as you can. There is no place for a minister like his own home. The Mowbray Narrows parsonage is a nice house although it is old. It was a very happy home for me ... at first ... until the death of my dear wife two years ago. Since then I have been very lonely. If it had not been for my friendship with the Blythes ... but a good many people disapproved of that because they were Presbyterians. However, you will have a good boarding place with Mrs. Richards. She will make you very comfortable."

"Unfortunately Mrs. Richards cannot take me after all. She has to go to the hospital for a rather serious operation. I am going to board at Mr. Field's ... Long Alec, I believe he is called. You seem to have odd nicknames in Mowbray Narrows ... I've heard a few already."

And then Mr. Sheldon had exclaimed, with something more than surprise in his tone,

"Long Alec's!"

"Yes, I prevailed on him and his sister to take me in for a few weeks, at least, on promise of good behaviour. I'm in luck. It's the only other place near the church. I had hard work to get them to consent."

"But ... Long Alec's!" said Mr. Sheldon again.

It struck Curtis that Mr. Sheldon's surprise was rather surprising. And there had been the same note in Dr. Blythe's voice when he had told him.

Why shouldn't he board at Long Alec's?

Long Alec seemed a most respectable and a rather attractive youngish man, with his fine-cut aquiline features and soft, dreamy grey eyes. And the sister ... a sweet, little brown thing, rather tired-looking, with a flute-like voice. Her face was as brown as a nut, her hair and eyes were brown, her lips scarlet. Of all the girls that had clustered, flowerlike, about the basement that day, casting shy glances of admiration at the handsome young minister, he remembered nothing. But somehow he remembered Lucia Field.

“Why not Long Alec’s?” he said.

Recalling, too, that a few other people besides Dr. Blythe had seemed taken aback when he had mentioned his change of boarding house. Why ... why? Long Alec was on the board of managers. He must be respectable.

Mr. Sheldon looked embarrassed.

“Oh, it is all right, I suppose. Only ... I shouldn’t have thought them likely to take a boarder. Lucia has her hands full as it is. You may have heard there is an invalid cousin there?”

“Yes, Dr. Blythe mentioned her. And I called to see her. What a tragedy ... that sweet, beautiful woman!”

“A beautiful woman indeed,” said Mr. Sheldon emphatically. “She is a wonderful woman, one of the greatest powers for good in Mowbray Narrows. They call her the angel of the community. I tell you, Mr. Burns, the influence that Alice Harper wields from that bed of helplessness is amazing. I cannot tell you what she has been to me during my pastorate here. And every other minister will tell you the same. Her wonderful life is an inspiration. The young girls of the congregation worship her. Do you know that for eight years she has taught a teenage class of girls? They go over to her room after the opening exercises of the Sunday school here. She enters into their lives ... they take all their problems and perplexities to her. They say she has made more matches than Mrs. Blythe ... and *that* is saying something. And it was entirely due to her that the church here was not hopelessly disrupted when Deacon North went on a rampage because Lucia Field played a sacred violin solo for a collection piece one day. Alice sent for the deacon and talked him into sanity. She told me the whole interview in confidence later, with her own inimitable little humorous touches. It was rich. If the deacon could have heard her! She is

full of fun. She suffers indescribably at times but no one has ever heard her utter a word of complaint.”

“Has she always been so?”

“Oh, no. She fell from the barn loft ten years ago. Hunting for eggs or something. She was unconscious for hours ... and has been paralyzed from the hips down ever since.”

“Have they had good medical advice?”

“The best. Winthrop Field ... Long Alec’s father ... had specialists from everywhere. They could do nothing for her. She was the daughter of Winthrop’s sister. Her father and mother died when she was a baby ... her father was a clever scamp who died a dipsomaniac, like his father before him ... and the Fields brought her up. Before her accident she was a slim, pretty, shy girl who liked to keep in the background and seldom went about with the other young people. I don’t know that her existence on her uncle’s charity was altogether easy. She feels her helplessness keenly. She can’t even turn herself in bed, Mr. Burns. And she feels that she is a burden on Alec and Lucia. They are very good to her ... I feel sure of that ... but young and healthy people cannot understand fully. Winthrop Field died seven years ago and his wife the next year. Then Lucia gave up her work in Charlottetown ... she was a teacher in the High School ... and came home to keep house for Alec and wait on Alice ... who can’t bear to have strangers handling her, poor soul.”

“Rather hard on Lucia,” commented Curtis.

“Well, yes, of course. She is a good girl, I think ... the Blythes think there is no one like her ... and Alec is a fine fellow in many ways. A little stubborn, perhaps. I’ve heard some talk of his being engaged to Edna Pollock ... I know Mrs. Dr. Blythe favours that match ... but it never comes to anything. Well, it’s a fine old place ... the Field farm is the best in Mowbray Narrows ... and Lucia is a good housekeeper.

I hope you’ll be comfortable ... but ...”

Mr. Sheldon stopped abruptly and stood up.

“Mr. Sheldon, what do you mean by that ‘but’?” said Curtis resolutely. “Some of the rest looked ‘but,’ too ... especially Dr. Blythe ... though they didn’t say it. I want to understand. I don’t like mysteries.”

“Then you shouldn’t go to board at Long Alec’s,” said Mr. Sheldon dryly.

“Why not? Surely there’s no great mystery connected with the family on a farm in Mowbray Narrows?”

“I suppose I’d better tell you. I’d rather you asked Dr. Blythe, though. It always makes me feel like a fool. As you say a plain farm in Mowbray Narrows is no place for any insoluble mystery. Yet there it is. Mr. Burns, there is something very strange about the old Field place. Mowbray Narrows people will tell you that it is ... haunted.”

“Haunted!” Curtis could not help laughing. “Mr. Sheldon, *you* don’t tell me that!”

“I once said ‘haunted’ in just the same tone,” said Mr. Sheldon a little sharply. Even if he were a saint he did not care to be laughed at by boys just out of college. “I never said it so after I spent a certain night there.”

“Of course, you don’t seriously believe in ghosts, Mr. Sheldon.” Privately, Curtis thought the old man was getting a little childish.

“Of course I don’t. That is, I don’t believe the strange things that have happened there during the last five or six years are supernatural or caused by supernatural agency. But the things *have* happened ... there is no doubt whatever of that ... and remember John Wesley ...”

“What things?”

Mr. Sheldon coughed.

“I ... I ... some of them sound a little ridiculous when put into words. But the cumulative effect is not ridiculous ... at least to those who have to live in the house and cannot find any explanation of them ... *cannot*, Mr. Burns. Rooms are turned upside down ... a cradle is rocked in the garret where no cradle is ... violins are played ... there are no violins in the house ... except Lucia’s, which is always kept locked up in her own room ... cold water is poured over people in bed ... clothes pulled off them ... shrieks ring through the garret ... dead people’s voices are heard talking in empty rooms ... bloody footprints are found on floors ... white figures have been seen walking on the barn roof. Oh, smile, Mr. Burns ... I smiled once, too. And I laughed when I heard that all the eggs under the setting hens last spring were discovered to be hard-boiled.”

“The Field ghost seems to have a sense of humour,” commented Curtis.

“It was no laughing matter when Long Alec’s binder house was burned last fall with his new binder in it. Every building might have gone if the

wind had been west instead of east. It was off by itself. Nobody had been near it for weeks.”

“But ... Mr. Sheldon ... if anybody but you had told me these things ...”

“You wouldn’t have believed them. I don’t blame you. But ask Dr. Blythe. I didn’t believe the yarns until I spent a night there.”

“And did anything ... what happened?”

“Well, I heard the cradle ... it rocked all night in the garret overhead. The dinner bell rang at midnight. I heard a devilish sort of laugh ... I can’t say whether it was in my room or out of it. There was a quality in it that filled me with a sickening sort of horror ... I admit it, Mr. Burns, that laughter was not human. And just before dawn every dish on one of the cupboard shelves was thrown to the floor and smashed. Moreover ...” Mr. Sheldon’s gentle old mouth twitched in spite of himself. “... the porridge at breakfast, which had been cooked the night before, was literally half salt.”

“Somebody was playing tricks.”

“Of course I believe that as firmly as you do. But what somebody? And how is it the somebody can’t be caught? You don’t suppose Long Alec and Lucia haven’t tried?”

“Do these performances go on every night?”

“Oh, no. Weeks will sometimes pass without an incident. And when people come in to watch generally nothing happens. They even had Dr. Blythe and Dr. Parker one night ... much against their will. The house was as quiet as the dead. But after a quiet interval there is generally an orgy. Moonlight nights are generally ... not always ... quiet.”

“Miss Field must have help. Who lives in the house besides her brother and her and Miss Harper?”

“Two people as a rule. Jock MacCree, a half-witted fellow who has made his home with the Fields for thirty years ... he must be close on fifty and has always been quiet and well behaved. And Julia Marsh, the servant girl. She is a lumpish, sulky sort of creature, one of the Upper Glen Marshes.”

“A half-wit ... and a girl with a grudge likely. I don’t think your ghost should be very hard to locate, Mr. Sheldon.”

“It’s not so simple as that, Mr. Burns. Of course, they were suspected at once. But the things go on when Jock is in the room with you. Julia would

never have her door locked, I admit, or stay with the watchers. But the same things happen when she is away.”

“Have you ever heard either of them laugh?”

“Yes. Jock giggles foolishly. Julia snorts. I cannot believe that either of them produced the sound I heard. Neither does Dr. Blythe. Mowbray Narrows people at first thought it was Jock. Now they believe it is ghosts ... they really do, even those who won’t admit they believe it.”

“What reason do they have for supposing the house is haunted?”

“Well, there’s a pitiful tale. Julia Marsh’s sister Anna used to work there before Julia. Help is hard to get in Mowbray Narrows, Mr. Curtis. And of course Lucia must have help ... she cannot do the work of that place and wait on Alice alone. Anna Marsh had had an illegitimate baby. It was about three years old and she used to have it there with her. It was a pretty little thing ... they all liked the child. One day it was drowned in the barn cistern ... Jock had left the top off. Anna seemed to take it coolly ... didn’t make a fuss ... didn’t even cry, I’m told. People said, ‘Oh, she’s glad to be rid of it. A bad lot, those Marshes. Too bad Lucia Field couldn’t get better help. Perhaps if they paid better wages ...’ and so on. But two weeks after the child was buried Anna hanged herself in the garret.”

Curtis gave a horrified exclamation.

“I have heard that Dr. Blythe warned them to watch her. But you see there is a magnificent foundation for a ghost story. They say that’s the true reason Edna Pollock won’t marry Long Alec. The Pollocks are well off and Edna is a smart, capable girl ... but a bit below the Fields socially and mentally. She wants Alec to sell and move. She insists that the place is under a curse. Well, as for that, a note was found one morning written in blood ... badly written and badly spelled ... Anna Marsh was very illiterate ... ‘If ever children are born in this house they will be born accursed.’ Dr. Blythe insisted it wasn’t Anna’s writing but ... well, there you are. Alec won’t sell ... even if he could find a purchaser, which is doubtful. The place has been in his family since 1770 and he says he is not going to be driven out of it by spooks. A few weeks after Anna’s death these performances began. The cradle was heard rocking in the garret ... there *was* a cradle there then. They took it away but the rocking went on just the same. Oh, everything has been done to solve the mystery. Neighbours have watched night after night. Sometimes nothing happened. Sometimes things

happened but they couldn't tell why. Three years ago Julia took a sulky fit and left ... said people were saying things about her and she wasn't going to stand for it. Lucia got Min Deacon from the Upper Glen. Min stayed three weeks ... she was a smart, capable girl ... and left because she was awakened by an icy hand on her face ... though she had locked her door before going to sleep. Then they got Maggie Eldon ... a young girl with no nerves. She had splendid black hair and was very proud of it. Never would have it bobbed. Icy hands and weird laughter and ghostly cradles didn't bother *her*. She was there for five weeks. But when she woke up one morning she found her beautiful braid of black hair had been cut off in the night. Well, that was too much for Maggie. Her young man didn't approve of bobbed hair. People will tell you that Anna Marsh had very poor hair and was very jealous of those who had nice hair.

"Lucia prevailed on Julia to come back and she's been there ever since. Personally I feel sure Julia hasn't anything to do with it and Dr. Blythe agrees with me. Have a talk with him sometime ... he's a very intelligent man, even if he is a Presbyterian."

"But if Julia has nothing to do with it, who has?"

"Oh, Mr. Burns, we can't answer that. And ... who knows what the powers of evil can or cannot do? Again I say remember Epworth Rectory. I don't think *that* mystery has ever been solved. And yet ... I hardly think the devil ... or even a malicious ghost ... would empty out a dozen bottles of raspberry vinegar and fill them up with red ink, salt and water."

Mr. Sheldon laughed in spite of himself. Curtis did not laugh ... he frowned.

"It is intolerable that such things should go on for five years and the perpetrator escape. It must be a dreadful life for Miss Field."

"Lucia takes it coolly. Some people think a little too coolly. Of course we have malicious people in Mowbray Narrows as well as everywhere else and some have hinted that she does the things herself. Only you'd better not say so to Mrs. Dr. Blythe. She is a special friend of Lucia's. Of course I never suspected her for a moment."

"I should think not. Apart from her personality, what earthly reason could she have?"

"To prevent Long Alec's marriage with Edna Pollock. Lucia was never particularly fond of Edna. And the Field pride might find it too hard to

swallow a Pollock alliance. Besides ... Lucia can play on the violin.”

“I could never believe such a thing of Miss Field.”

“No, I don’t think I could, either. And what Mrs. Blythe would do to me, old as I am, if I hinted such a thing to her, I don’t really know. And I don’t really know much about Miss Field. She hasn’t taken any part in the church work ... well, I suppose she couldn’t. But it is hard to kill an insinuation. I have fought and ousted many a lie, Mr. Burns, but some insinuations have beaten me. Lucia is a reserved little thing ... I really think Mrs. Blythe is the only intimate friend she has ... perhaps I am too old to get acquainted with her. Well, I’ve told you all I know about our mystery. No doubt there are others who could tell you much more. If you can put up with Long Alec’s spooks until Mrs. Richards’ recovery there is no reason why you shouldn’t be very comfortable. I know Alice will be glad to have you there. She worries over the mystery ... she thinks it keeps people away ... well, of course it does, more or less ... and she’s fond of company, poor girl. Besides, she’s very nervous about the goings-on. I hope I haven’t made you nervous.”

“No ... you have interested me. I believe there is some quite simple solution.”

“And you also believe that everything has been greatly exaggerated? Oh, not by me ... I acquit you of that ... but by my gossiping parishioners. Well, I daresay there *has* been a good deal of exaggeration. Stories can grow to huge proportions in five years and we country folks are very fond of a spice of the dramatic. Twice two making four is dull but twice two making five is exciting ... as Mrs. Blythe says. But my hard-headed deacon, old Malcolm Dinwoodie, heard Winthrop Field talking in the parlour there one night ... years after he had been buried. Nobody who had once heard Winthrop Field’s peculiar voice could mistake it ... or the little nervous laugh he always ended up with.”

“But I thought it was Anna Marsh’s ghost that was supposed to ‘walk’?”

“Well, her voice has been heard, too. I am not going to talk any more about this! You will think me a doddering idiot. Perhaps you won’t be so sure when you have lived in that house for a while. And perhaps the spook will respect the cloth and behave while you are there. Perhaps you may even find out the truth.”

“Mr. Sheldon is a saint and a better man and minister than I will ever be,” mused Curtis, as he walked across the road to his boarding place. “But the old fellow believes Long Alec’s house is haunted ... he couldn’t hide that in spite of the raspberry vinegar. Well, here’s for a bout with the ghosts. I *will* have a talk with Dr. Blythe about it. And twice two *is* four.”

He looked behind him at his little church ... a tranquil old grey building among sunken graves and mossy gravestones under the sharp silvery sky of late evening. Beside it was the parsonage, a nice chubby old house built when stone was cheaper than lumber or brick. It looked lonely and appealing. Directly across the road from it was the “old Field place.” The wide, rather low house, with its many porches, had an odd resemblance to a motherly old hen, with little chickens peeping out from under her breast and wings. There was a peculiar arrangement of dormer windows in the roof. The window of a room in the main house was at right angles to one in the “el” and was so close to it that people could have shaken hands from window to window. There was something about this architectural trick that pleased Curtis. It gave the roof an individuality. Some great spruce trees grew about it, stretching their boughs around it lovingly. The whole place had atmosphere, charm, suggestion. As an old aunt of Curtis Burns would have said,

“There’s *family* behind that.”

Virginia creeper rioted over the porches. Gnarled apple trees, from which sounded faint, delicate notes of birds, bent over plots of old-fashioned flowers ... thickets of white and fragrant sweet-clover, beds of mint and southernwood, pansies, honeysuckles, and blush roses. There was an old mossy path, bordered by clamshells running up to the front door. Beyond were comfortable barns and a pasture field lying in the coolness of the evening, sprinkled over with the ghosts of dandelions. A wholesome, friendly old place. Nothing spookish about it. Mr. Sheldon was a saint, but he was very old. Old people believed things too easily.

Curtis Burns had been boarding at the old Field place for five weeks and nothing had happened ... except that he had fallen fathoms deep in love with Lucia Field. And he did not know that this had happened. Nobody knew it except Mrs. Dr. Blythe ... and perhaps Alice Harper, who seemed to see things invisible to others with those clear, beautiful eyes of hers.

She and Curtis were close friends. Like everyone else he was racked alternately with inexpressible admiration for her courage and spirit and fierce pity for her sufferings and helplessness. In spite of her thin, lined face she had a strange look of youth, partly owing to her short golden hair, which everyone admired, and partly to the splendour of her large eyes, which always seemed to have a laugh at the back of them ... though she never laughed. She had a sweet smile with a hint of roguishness in it ... especially when Curtis told her a joke. He was good at telling a joke ... better than a minister should be, some of his Mowbray Narrows parishioners thought ... but he carried a new one to Alice every day.

She never complained, though there were occasional days when she moaned ceaselessly in almost unendurable agony and could see no one except Alec and Lucia. Some heart weakness made drugs dangerous and little could be done to relieve her but in such attacks she could not bear to be alone.

On such days Curtis was left largely to the tender mercies of Julia Marsh ... who served his meals properly but whom he could not bear. She was a rather handsome creature, though her clear red-and-white face was marred and rendered sinister by a birthmark ... a deep red band across one cheek.

Her eyes were small and amber-hued, her reddish-brown hair was splendid and untidy, and she moved with a graceful stealthiness of motion and limb like a cat in the twilight. She was a great talker, save on days when she took tantrums and became possessed of a silent devil. Then not a word could be got out of her and she glowered and lowered like a thunderstorm.

Lucia did not seem to mind these moods ... Lucia took everything that came to her with a sweet undisturbed serenity ... but Curtis seemed to feel them all over the house. At such times Julia seemed to him a baffling, inhuman creature who might do anything. Sometimes Curtis was sure she was at the bottom of the spook business; at other times he was just as sure it was Jock MacCree. He had even less use for Jock than Julia and could not understand why Lucia and Long Alec seemed actually to have an affection for the uncanny fellow.

Jock was fifty and looked a hundred in some ways. He had staring, filmy grey eyes, lank black hair and a curiously protruding lip, with a

skinny sallow face. The lip gave his face a singularly disagreeable profile. He was always arrayed in a motley collection of garments ... of his own choice it would seem, not of necessity or Long Alec's decree ... and spent most of his time carrying food to and looking after Long Alec's innumerable pigs. He made money for Long Alec out of the pigs but of other work he could be trusted with nothing.

When alone by himself he sang old Scotch songs in a surprisingly sweet, true voice but with something peculiar in its timbre. So Jock was musical, Curtis noted, remembering the violin. But he had never heard of him being able to play it.

Jock's speaking voice was high-pitched and childish and occasionally his expressionless face was shot through with gleams of malice, especially when Julia, whom he hated, spoke to him. When he smiled ... which was rarely ... he looked incredibly cunning. From the beginning he seemed to have an awe of the black-coated minister and kept out of his way as much as possible, though Curtis sought him out, determined, if possible, to solve the mystery of the place.

He had come to think lightly of this mystery. Dr. Blythe would not discuss it and he put little faith in Mr. Sheldon's reminiscences. Everything had been normal and natural since his coming ... except that one night, when he sat up late in his dormer-windowed room to study, he had a curious, persistent feeling that he was being watched ... by some inimical personality at that. He put it down to nerves. It was never repeated. Once, too, when he had risen in the night to lower his window against a high wind, he had looked across the room at the moonlit parsonage and for a moment thought he saw someone looking out of the study window. He examined the parsonage next day but found no traces of any intruder. The doors were locked, the windows securely closed. No one had a key except himself ... and Mr. Sheldon, who still kept most of his books and some other things in the parsonage, though he was boarding with Mrs. Knapp at Glen St. Mary. Moreover, he would never have been in the parsonage so late. Curtis concluded that some odd effect of moonlight and tree shadows had tricked him.

Evidently the perpetrator of the tricks knew when it was wise to lie low. A resident boarder, young and ... well ... shrewd ... was a different proposition from a transient guest, an old man, or a sleepy, superstitious

neighbour. So Curtis concluded, in his youthful complacency ... deliberately forcing himself not to think of the doctors. He was really sorry nothing had happened. He wanted to have a chance at the spooks.

Neither Lucia nor Long Alec ever referred to their “ha’nts,” nor did he. But he had talked the matter over thoroughly with Alice, who had mentioned it when he went in to see her on the evening of his arrival.

“So you are not afraid of our whow-whows? You know our garret is full of them,” she said whimsically, as she gave him her hand.

Curtis noticed that Lucia, who had just finished giving Alice’s back and shoulders the half-hour’s rub that was necessary every night, flushed deeply and suddenly. The flush became her, transforming her into beauty.

“Is there anything more you would like, Alice?” asked Lucia in a low voice.

“No, dear. I feel very comfortable. Run away and rest. I know you must be tired. And I want to get really acquainted with my new minister.”

Lucia went out, her face still flushed. Evidently she did not like any reference to the spooks. Curtis felt a sudden, upsetting thrill at his heart as he watched her. He wanted to comfort her ... help her ... wipe that tired patience from her sweet brown little face ... make her smile ... make her laugh.

“I’m afraid I don’t take your whow-whows very seriously, Miss Harper,” he said, before Lucia was out of hearing.

“Ah, you are so nice and young,” Alice was saying. “I’ve never known any but an old minister. This is not the most desirable circuit in the world, you know. They generally send the worn-outs here. I don’t know how they came to send you. I like youth. And so you don’t believe in our family ghosts?”

“I can’t believe all the things I’ve heard, Miss Harper. They are too preposterous.”

“And yet they are true ... well, most of them. I daresay they don’t lose anything by telling. And there are things nobody has heard. Mr. Burns, may we have a frank talk about it? I’ve never been able to talk frankly to anyone about it. Lucia and Alec naturally can’t bear to talk of it ... it makes Mr. Sheldon nervous ... and one can’t talk about such things to an outsider ... at least, I can’t. I tried once with Dr. Blythe ... I have great confidence in him ... but he refused to discuss it. When I heard you were

coming here for a few weeks I was glad. Mr. Burns, I can't help hoping that you will solve the mystery ... especially for the sake of Lucia and Alec. Because it is ruining their lives. It's bad enough to have me on their hands ... but ghosts and devilry, plus me, are really too much. And they writhe with humiliation over it ... you know it is considered a kind of disgraceful thing to have ghosts in the family."

"What is your idea about the matter, Miss Harper?"

"Oh, I suppose Jock does it ... or he and Julia between them ... though no one can understand how or why. Jock, you know, isn't really half such a fool as he looks. Dr. Blythe says he has more sense than many a supposedly wise man. And he used to prowl about the house after night long ago ... Uncle Winthrop often caught him. But he never did anything but prowl then ... at least that we ever discovered."

"How does he come to be here at all?"

"His father, Dave MacCree, was hired man here years ago. He saved Henry Kildare's life when Uncle Winthrop's black stallion attacked him."

"Henry Kildare?" Here was another complication. And was it possible that there was a slight blush on Alice's face?

"A young boy who also worked here. He went west years ago. He isn't in the picture at all ..." Curtis was sure of the blush this time. Some childish romance probably ... "Uncle Winthrop was so grateful to Jock's father for preventing such a thing happening that when Dave died the next year ... he was a widower with no relatives ... Uncle Winthrop promised him that Jock should always have a home here. Lucia and Alec promised it in their turn. We Fields are a clannish crew, Mr. Burns, and always back each other up and keep fast hold of our traditions. Jock has become one of our long-established customs. Not that I don't say he earns his keep."

"Is it possible Julia Marsh is guilty?"

"I can't believe such a thing of Julia. The things go on when she is away. The only time I've really suspected her was when the church supper money vanished the night after Alec brought it home. He was treasurer of the committee. A hundred dollars disappeared out of his desk. Jock wouldn't have taken it. He has no sense of the value of money. I heard there was an eruption of new dresses in the Marsh gang all that year. Julia herself came out resplendent in a purple silk. They declared an uncle of

theirs had died out west and left them the money. That is the only time money has been taken.”

“I am sure that was Julia, Miss Harper.”

“I think so, too, Mr. Burns ... did anyone ever hint to you that Lucia does the things?”

“Well ... Mr. Sheldon told me people have hinted it.”

“Mr. Sheldon! Why should he have told you that? It’s a cruel, malicious falsehood,” Alice exclaimed emphatically ... almost too emphatically, Curtis thought, as if she were trying to convince herself as much as him. “Lucia could never do such things ... never. She is entirely incapable of it. Nobody knows that child as I do, Mr. Burns. Her sweetness ... her patience ... her ... her *Fieldness*. Think of what it must have meant to her to give up her life and work in town and bury herself in Mowbray Narrows! When I think that it was because of me it almost drives me crazy. Never for one moment, Mr. Burns, let yourself believe that Lucia has done the things that are done here, no matter what Mr. Sheldon or Dr. Blythe ... oh, yes, he has his suspicions, too ...”

“Of course I don’t believe it. And Dr. Blythe has never hinted such a thing to me, while Mr. Sheldon only told me what other people have said. But if it isn’t Jock or Julia, who is it?”

“That is the question. Once an idea occurred to me ... but it was so wild ... so incredible ... I couldn’t even put it into words. I hinted it to Dr. Blythe ... and such a snub as he gave me! And Dr. Blythe *can* give snubs when he wants to, I can assure you.”

“Has anything happened lately?”

“Well, the telephone has rung our call at midnight and three o’clock every night for a week. And I believe Alec found another curse ... written in blood ... written backward so that it could be read only in the mirror. Our ghost is strong on curses, Mr. Burns. This one was a peculiarly nasty one. You’ll find it in that little table drawer. I made Lucia give it to me ... it was she who found it. I wanted to show it to you ... and Dr. Blythe. Yes, that is it ... hold it up to my little hand mirror.”

“‘Heaven and hell shall blast your happiness. You shall be smitten in the persons of those you love. Your life shall be recked and your house left unto you desolate.’ Mmm ... the ghost has a poor taste in stationery,” said

Curtis, looking at the blue-lined sheet of paper on which the words were scribbled.

“Yes ... rather. You notice the spelling of ‘wrecked.’ But even so the whole composition seems to me beyond Jock ... or even Julia. So far I agree with Mr. Sheldon and Dr. Blythe. The coal oil that was poured into the cold chicken broth in the pantry night before last was more in his line. Also the delicate humour of a jug of molasses spilled all over the parlour carpet. It cost poor Lucia a hard day’s work to get it cleaned up. Of course that might have been Julia. She really hates poor Lucia because she is mistress here.”

“But surely the doer of a trick like that could be easily caught.”

“If we knew when it was going to be done ... oh, yes. But we can’t watch every night. And generally when anyone is watching nothing happens.”

“That proves it must be someone in the house. An outsider wouldn’t know when there was to be a watch.”

“In a gossip neighbourhood like Mowbray Narrows that proves nothing. And yet, Mr. Burns, the cradle was rocked and the violin played weirdly all night in the garret two weeks ago when Julia was away and Jock was out in the stable with Alec, working over a sick cow. They were never parted for a minute. When I told Dr. Blythe that he merely shrugged his shoulders.”

“You quote Dr. Blythe very often. What about Mrs. Blythe?”

“The doctor often comes here to talk with Alec. I don’t know Mrs. Blythe so well. Some people don’t like her ... but from the little I’ve seen of her I should judge her a very charming woman.”

“Is it true that the voices of ... supposedly dead people have been heard?”

“Yes.” Alice shivered. “It doesn’t happen often ... but it has happened. I don’t like to talk of that.”

“Nevertheless, I must learn all about this if I am to be of any help in solving the mystery.”

“Well, I heard Uncle Winthrop outside my door one night saying, ‘Alice, would you like anything? Have they done everything you want?’ He used to do that when he was alive. Very gently so as not to disturb me if I was really asleep. Of course it couldn’t have really been his voice ... someone was imitating him. You see,” she added with a return of her

whimsicality, “our ghost is so extremely versatile. If it would stick to one line ... but eeriness and roguery together is a hard combination to solve.”

“Which proves that there is more than one person concerned in this.”

“So I’ve often said ... but ... well, never mind, let it go. The curse has worried Alec, Lucia tells me. His nerves are not good lately ... things ‘get on’ them. And there have been so many curses ... mostly Bible verses. Our spooks know their Bible, Mr. Burns ... which is another count against the Jock and Julia theories.”

“But this is intolerable ... this persecution. Someone must hate your family very bitterly.”

“In Mowbray Narrows? Oh, no. And we are all used to it, more or less. At least, Lucia and Alec are. Or seem to be. I didn’t mind so much until the binder house was burned last fall. I admit that got me down. Since then I’ve been haunted by the fear that the house will go next ... and me locked in here.”

“Locked!”

“Why, yes. I make Lucia lock my door every night ... though she hates to do it. I could never sleep ... I’m a wretched sleeper at any time except in the early morning. But I couldn’t sleep at all with that door unlocked and goodness knows what prowling around the house.”

“But the goodness knows what isn’t baffled by locked doors ... if the Min Deacon and Maggie Eldon tales are to be believed.”

“Oh, I don’t believe Min or Maggie really had their doors locked when the things happened to them. Of course, they thought they had. But they must have forgotten for once. At any rate I make sure mine is always locked.”

“I don’t think that is wise, Miss Harper, I really don’t.”

“Oh, the door is old and thin and could easily be broken in if there was any serious need for it. Well, we won’t talk any more about it just now. But I want you to keep your eyes open ... metaphorically ... as far as everybody is concerned ... everybody ... and we’ll see what we can do together. And you’ll let me help you in the church work as much as I can, won’t you? Mr. Sheldon did ... though I never thought he really wanted me to.”

“I will be very glad to have your help and counsel, Miss Harper. And I assure you Mr. Sheldon spoke to me most highly of your influence and work.”

“Well, I want to do what I can while I’m here. Some of these days I’ll just go out ... poof! ... as a candle flickers and dies. My heart won’t behave. Now, never mind hunting in your mind, Mr. Burns, for the proper and tactful thing to say ...”

“I wasn’t,” protested Curtis, perhaps not altogether truthfully. “But surely a doctor ...”

“Dr. Blythe says there is nothing really wrong with my heart except nerves and other doctors say different things. I *know*. And I’ve looked death too long in the face to be afraid of it. Only sometimes in the long, wakeful hours I shrink a little from it ... even though life holds nothing for me. It seems to me that I’ve been cheated. Well, my lot is easier than that of hundreds of others after all.”

“Miss Harper, is it certain nothing can be done for you?”

“Absolutely. Uncle Winthrop didn’t leave it to Dr. Blythe’s opinion, you know. He had a dozen specialists here. The last was Dr. Clifford of Halifax ... you know him? When he could do me no good I simply told Uncle Winthrop I would have no more doctors. I would not have them spending money on me when they could not afford it and might just as well burn it. So you see Dr. Blythe’s opinion was fully justified in this instance at least.”

“But new things are being discovered every day ...”

“Nothing that would help me. Oh, I’m not so badly off as hundreds of others. Everyone is so good to me ... and I flatter myself I am not altogether useless. It’s only once a week or so that I suffer much. So we’ll let it go at that, Mr. Burns. I’m more interested in the church work and your success here. I want you to get along well.”

“So do I,” laughed Curtis ... although he did not feel like laughing.

“Don’t be too good-tempered,” said Alice, solemnly, but with mischief glimmering in her eyes. “Mr. Sheldon was never put out about anything and he was scandalously imposed on.”

“Saints generally are,” said Curtis.

“Poor old man, he hated to retire but it was really time. The Conference never knows what to do with old men. He has never been the same since the death of his wife. He took it terribly hard. Indeed, for a year after her death people thought his mind was affected. He would do and say such odd things, with apparently no recollection of them afterwards. And he took

such a spite to Alec ... said he wasn't orthodox. But that all passed. Will you draw up my blind and lower my light, please? Thank you. What a majestic sweep of wind there is in the trees tonight! And no moonlight. I don't like moonlight. It always reminds me of things I want to forget. Good-night. Don't dream or see any 'ha'nts.'"

Curtis neither dreamed nor saw "ha'nts," though he lay awake for a long time, thinking of the tragedy that had met him on the very threshold of his pastorate in Mowbray Narrows ... quiet Mowbray Narrows with its seemingly commonplace inhabitants.

He was a little disappointed that he did not see or hear anything uncommon. But as the weeks passed he almost forgot that he was living in a supposedly "haunted" house. He was very busy getting acquainted with his people and organizing his church work ... which old Mr. Sheldon had undoubtedly allowed to lapse. In this he found Alice Harper's assistance invaluable. He could never have reorganized the choir without her. She smoothed irritations and talked away jealousies. It was she who managed Deacon Kirk when he tried to put his foot down on the Boy Scout business; it was she who smoothed Curtis out of his consequent bitterness and annoyance.

"And even Mr. Sheldon didn't really approve of it," he exclaimed bitterly.

"Old people don't usually take to new ideas," she said mildly, "and you mustn't mind Mr. Kirk. He was born a nincompoop, you know. Susan Baker would tell you that. And he is a good man and would be quite a nice one if he didn't really think it was his Christian duty to be a little miserable and cantankerous all the time."

"I wish I could be as tolerant as you, Miss Harper. You make me feel ashamed of myself."

"I have learned tolerance in a hard school. I wasn't always tolerant. But Deacon Kirk was funny ... I wish you could have heard him."

Her mimicry of the deacon sent Curtis into howls of laughter. Alice smiled over her success. Curtis had got into the habit of talking over all his problems with her. Some people said Mr. Sheldon didn't like it. He made a sort of idol of her and worshipped her like a Madonna in a shrine.

Yet she had her small foibles. She must know everything that went on in the house and church and community. It hurt her to be shut out of

anything. Curtis thought that was probably one reason she did not seem to care much for Dr. Blythe or his wife, whom everybody else in Glen St. Mary and Mowbray Narrows seemed to love.

Curtis told her all his comings and goings, finding her oddly jealous about his little secrets. She must even know what he had to eat when he went out to supper. And she was avid about the details of all his weddings.

“All weddings are interesting,” she averred, “even the weddings of people I don’t know.”

She liked to talk over his sermons with him while he was preparing them and was childishly pleased when now and then he preached from a text of her choosing.

He was very happy. He loved his work and found his boarding house most agreeable. Long Alec was an intelligent, well-read fellow. Dr. Blythe dropped in occasionally, and they had long, interesting conversations. When Mrs. Richards died in the hospital it was taken for granted that Curtis should go on boarding at the Field place as long as he wanted to. Mowbray Narrows people seemed resigned to it, although they did not approve of his falling in love with Lucia.

Everybody in the congregation knew that he was in love with Lucia long before he knew it himself. He only knew that Lucia’s silences were quite as enchanting as Long Alec’s eloquence or Alice’s trick of sly, humorous sayings. He only knew that other girls’ faces seemed futile and insipid compared with her brown beauty. He only knew that the sight of her stepping about the neat, dignified old rooms, coming down the dark shining staircase, cutting flowers in the garden, making salads and cakes in the pantry, affected him like a perfect chord of music and seemed to waken echoes in his soul that repeated the enchantment as he went to and fro among his people.

Once he trembled on the verge of discovering his own secret ... when Lucia brought Alice in some blush roses one day. Mr. Sheldon was there, too, having just returned from a visit to some friends in Montreal. He had been away ever since the squabble over the organization of the Boy Scouts.

Lucia had evidently been crying. And Lucia was not a girl who cried easily or readily. Curtis was suddenly seized with a desire to draw her head down on his shoulder and comfort her. Anyone could have read the desire in his face.

He was even following her from the room when a spasm of pain twisted Alice's face and she gave a gasping cry.

"Lucia ... come back ... quick, please. I'm going to have ... one of ... my spells."

Mr. Sheldon decamped quickly. Curtis did not see Lucia again for twenty-four hours. Most of the time she was in Alice's darkened room, vainly trying to relieve the sufferer. So he went a little longer in ignorance, though even old Mr. Sheldon was shaking his head and saying it wouldn't do ... no, it wouldn't do at all.

As he returned from the garden after seeing Mr. Sheldon off he noticed that a beautiful young white birch, which had been growing exquisitely among the spruces in a corner, had been cut down. It was Lucia's favourite tree ... she had spoken of her love for it on the preceding evening. It was lying on the ground, its limp leaves quivering pitifully.

He spoke of it rather indignantly to Long Alec.

"The tree was all right last night," said Long Alec. "Mr. Sheldon remarked on its beauty when he called for a moment on his way to the station."

Curtis stared.

"Didn't you cut it down ... or order it cut? I've heard you say the trees were growing too thick around the house."

"I wouldn't be likely to cut down a white birch. It was like this when we got up this morning."

"Then ... who cut it down?"

"Our dear ghost, I suppose," said Long Alec bitterly, turning away. Alec would never discuss the ghost.

Curtis saw Julia's queer little amber eyes watching him from the back veranda. He remembered hearing her ask Jock the preceding day to sharpen the axe kept sacred to the splitting of kindling.

For the next three weeks Curtis had plenty to think about. One night he was awakened by the telephone ringing the Field call. He sat up in bed. Over his head in the garret a cradle was rocking distinctly. Curtis rose, flung on a dressing gown, snatched up his flashlight, went down the hall, opened the door into the little recess at its end and went up the garret stair. The cradle had stopped. The long room was bare and quiet under its rafters, hung with bunches of herbs, bags of feathers, and a few discarded

garments. There was little in the garret ... two big wooden chests, a spinning wheel, some bags of wool. A rat could easily have hidden in it but no bigger thing. Curtis went down and as he reached the foot of the stair the weird strains of a violin floated down after him. He was conscious of a nasty crinkling of his nerves, but he dashed up again. Nothing ... nobody was there. The garret was as still and innocent as before. Yet as he went down the music recommenced.

The telephone rang again in the dining room. Curtis went down and answered it. There was no response. It was of no use to call up central. The line was a rural party one with twenty subscribers on it.

Curtis deliberately listened at the door of Long Alec's bedroom off the dining room. He could hear Long Alec's breathing. He tiptoed up the kitchen stair to Jock's door. Jock was snoring. He went back through the house and up the front stair. The telephone rang again. Opposite the stair was the door of Alice's room. He did not listen there. Her light as usual was burning and she was repeating the twenty-third psalm to herself in her soft, clear voice. A few steps further down the hall was Julia's room, opposite his own.

Curtis listened at the door but heard nothing. Lucia's room was beyond the stair railing. He did not listen there. But he could not help the thought that everyone in the house seemed accounted for except Julia ... and Lucia. He went back to his own room, stood for a moment in scowling reflection, and got into bed.

As he did so an eerie, derisive laugh sounded distinctly just outside his door.

For the first time in his life Curtis knew sickening fear, and the peculiar clammy perspiration it induces. He remembered what Mr. Sheldon had said ... there was something not human in it.

For a moment he went down before his horror. Then he set his teeth, sprang out of bed and flung open the door.

There was nothing in the great empty hall. Julia's tight-shut door opposite him seemed to wear an air of stealthy triumph. He could even hear her snoring.

"I wonder if Dr. Blythe ever heard that laugh," he thought, as he reluctantly returned to bed.

He did not sleep the remainder of the night. Lucia looked worried at the breakfast table.

“Were ... were you disturbed last night?” she asked at last hesitatingly.

“Rather,” said Curtis. “I spent considerable time prowling about your house and eavesdropping shamelessly ... all to no effect. I was not a bit the wiser.”

Lucia produced the forlorn little spectre of a smile.

“If prowling and eavesdropping could have solved our problem it would have been solved long ago. Alec and I have given up taking any notice of the ... the manifestations. Generally we sleep through them now unless something very startling occurs. I had ... hoped there wouldn’t be any more ... at least while you were here. We have never had such a long interval of freedom.”

“Will you give me carte blanche for investigation?” asked Curtis.

He could not help noticing that Lucia hesitated perceptibly.

“Oh yes,” she said at last. “Only ... please don’t talk to me about it. I can’t endure to hear it mentioned. It’s weak and foolish of me, I suppose. But it has got to be such a sore subject. Once I could talk to Dr. or Mrs. Gilbert Blythe about it ... but now I can’t even bear to discuss it with them. You’ve met them, of course ... they are lovely people, aren’t they?”

“I like Mrs. Blythe very much ... but the doctor seems a bit sarcastic ...”

“Only when you try to talk about our ... our ‘ghost’ with him. For some reason I have never been able to understand he doesn’t believe in ... it ... at all. Oh, of course he ‘investigated’ ... but so many people have done that. And nobody ever finds out anything.”

“I understand,” said Curtis, who understood nothing at all about it. “But I’m going to nab your ‘ghost,’ Miss Field. This thing has got to be cleared up. It is intolerable in this country ... and this century. It will completely ruin your life and your brother’s if you stay here.”

“And we must stay here,” said Lucia with a rueful smile. “Alec would never hear of selling. Besides, who would buy it? And we love this old place.”

“Is it true,” asked Curtis hesitatingly ... “and forgive me if I ask a question I shouldn’t. Believe me, it is not out of idle curiosity. Is it true that Miss Pollock won’t marry your brother because of this?”

Lucia's face changed a little. Her scarlet lips seemed to thin a trifle. People who had known old Winthrop Field would have said she was looking like her father.

"Don't answer if you think me impertinent," said Curtis apologetically.

"If it is ... and I do not know anything about Miss Pollock's motives ... I don't think Alec is to be pitied on that score. The Pollocks are nobodies. One of Edna's uncles died in jail."

Curtis thought her little foible of family pride quite enchanting. She was so very human, this brown, sweet thing.

During the weeks that followed Curtis Burns sometimes thought he would go crazy. Sometimes he thought they were all crazy together. Dr. Blythe was away at some medical congress and Mr. Sheldon was laid up with bronchitis ... though his nurse had been heard to say that it was more imagination with him than anything else. But Emma Mowbray was noted for her impatience. She said he would not stay in bed and that was the main cause of his illness.

Curtis prowled ... he investigated ... he passed sleepless hours on guard ... he spent whole nights in the garret ... and he got nowhere. He knew, too, that his people were growing critical ... he should change his boarding place, they said, or move into the parsonage.

Things happened almost continually ... ridiculous and horrible things all jumbled up together. Twelve dozen eggs packed for market were found broken all over the kitchen floor. Lucia's new sheer dress was found ruined in the closet of the guest room. She took it coolly ... she had never liked the dress, it seemed. The violin played and the cradle rocked. And at times the house seemed possessed by diabolical laughter. Several times all the furniture in the lower rooms was found piled in the middle of the floor ... involving a day's work of restoration for Lucia, for Julia refused to have anything to do with "spook doings." Outer doors, locked at night, were found wide open in the morning, although Long Alec slept with the keys under his pillow. The spigot was pulled out of the churn in the dairy and a week's cream spilled on the floor. The guest room bed was tossed and tumbled as if slept in overnight. Pigs and calves were let out to riot in the garden. Ink was spattered all over the walls of the newly papered hall. Plentiful curses were scattered about. Voices sounded in that exasperating, commonplace garret. Finally, Lucia's pet kitten ... a beautiful little Persian

Curtis had brought her from Charlottetown ... was found hung on the back veranda, its poor little body dangling limply from the fretwork.

"I knew this would happen when you gave it to me," said Lucia bitterly. "Four years ago Mrs. Blythe gave me a lovely pup. It was strangled. I've never dared to have a pet since. Everything I love dies or is destroyed. My white calf ... my dog ... my birch tree ... and now my kitten."

For the most part Curtis carried on his investigations alone. Long Alec bluntly stated that he was fed up with spook stalking. He had had too many years of it and had given it up. As long as the ghosts left his roof over his head he would leave them alone. Once or twice Curtis got Mr. Sheldon, who had recovered from his illness, to watch with him. Nothing at all happened those nights ... except that a large key, very much resembling Long Alec's kitchen key, fell out of the old man's pocket once. Mr. Sheldon had picked it up rather hurriedly and said it was the old key of the parsonage door. He asked Dr. Blythe, who had returned, to share a vigil, but the doctor bluntly refused. The spooks, he said, were too clever for him.

Finally he had Henry Kildare.

Henry was quite confident at first.

"I'll have that spook's hide nailed to the barn door by morning, preacher," he boasted.

But Henry capitulated in blind terror when he heard Winthrop Field's voice talking in the garret.

"No more ghosting for me, preacher. Don't tell *me* ... I know old Winthrop's voice well enough ... I worked here for three years. That's him, as sure as sin. Preacher, you'd better get out of this house as soon as you can if you have to live in a tent. Believe me, it ain't healthy."

Henry Kildare's reappearance in Mowbray Narrows had created quite a sensation. He was said to have made a fortune lumbering in British Columbia and announced that he could live on millionaire row for the rest of his life. He certainly threw money about freely enough. He stayed with a cousin but spent a good deal of time at the old Field place. They liked him there. He was a big, bluff, hearty man, not over-refined, rather handsome, generous, boastful. Alice was never tired of hearing his tales of the Coast. To her, imprisoned within walls for years, it was as if she could look out into a wonderful freedom of adventure and peril. But Henry, who

had fronted the northern silences, cold and terrors undauntedly, could not front the Field spooks. He flatly refused to spend another night in the house.

“Preacher, this place is full of devils ... not a doubt of it. That Anna Marsh doesn’t stay in her proper grave. Dr. Blythe can laugh all he likes ... but she never *would* behave herself ... and she drags old Winthrop out with her. Alec’d better give the place away if anyone would take it. I know I wouldn’t. I wish I could get Alice ... and Lucia ... out of it. They’ll be found strangled like the kitten some night ...”

Curtis was thoroughly exasperated. It seemed just as impossible that any one person in the house could have done all the things as that any person out of the house could have done them. Sometimes, so befuddled and bamboozled did he feel, that he was almost tempted to believe that the place *was* haunted. If not, he was being made a fool of. Either conclusion was intolerable. It was tacitly understood that the occurrences were not to be talked of outside, except with Dr. Blythe or Mr. Sheldon. He could never get any satisfaction out of the former and little out of Mr. Sheldon, who spent a good deal of his time with his books in the parsonage, sometimes reading there till late at night. But all his talks and guesses and researches left him exactly where he was at first ... except that he decided that Mr. Sheldon, recalling Epworth Rectory, *did* believe in the ghosts and that Dr. Blythe, for some undiscoverable reason, seemed to look upon the whole thing as a sort of joke ... heaven knew why.

Curtis developed insomnia and couldn’t sleep even when the house was quiet. He lost his keen interest in his work ... he was under an obsession. Both Dr. Blythe and Mr. Sheldon noticed it and advised him to find another boarding house. By this time Curtis knew he could not do this. For by now he knew he loved Lucia.

He realized this one night when the banging of the big front door had aroused him from some late studies. He put his book aside and went downstairs. The door was shut but not locked as it had been when the household retired. As he tried the knob Lucia came out of the dining room, carrying a small lamp. She was crying ... he had never seen Lucia cry before, although once or twice he had suspected tears. Her hair hung over her shoulder in a thick braid. It made her look like a child ... a tired, broken-hearted child. And then all at once he knew what she meant to him.

“What is the matter, Lucia?” he asked gently, unconscious that for the first time he had used her Christian name.

“Look,” sobbed Lucia, holding the lamp up in the dining room doorway.

At first Curtis could not exactly understand what had happened. The room seemed to be a perfect maze of ... of ... what was it? Coloured yarns! They crossed and recrossed it. They were wound in and out of the furniture ... around the chair rungs ... about the table legs. The room looked like a huge spider’s web.

“My afghan,” said Lucia. “My new afghan! I finished it yesterday. It’s completely unravelled out ... I’ve been working at it since New Year’s. Oh, I’m a fool to mind this ... so many worse things have happened. But I have so little time to do anything like that. And the malice of it! Who is it that hates me so? Don’t tell me a ghost would do anything like this!”

She broke away from Curtis’ outstretched hand and ran upstairs still sobbing. Curtis stood rather dazedly in the hall. He knew now that he had loved her from their first meeting. He could have laughed at himself for his long blindness. Love her ... of course he loved her ... he had known it the moment he had seen the tears in her brave, sweet eyes. Lucia in tears ... tears that he had no right or power to wipe away. The thought was unbearable.

Alice called to him as he passed her door. He unlocked it and went in. The fresh, sweet wind of night was blowing through her window and a faint light was breaking behind the church.

“I’ve had a rather bad night,” said Alice. “But it has been quiet, hasn’t it? Except for the door, of course.”

“Quiet enough,” said Curtis grimly. “Our ghost has amused himself with a nice, quiet job. Ravelling out Lucia’s afghan. Miss Harper, I am at my wit’s end.”

“It *must* be Julia who has done this. She was very sulky all day yesterday. Lucia had scolded her about something. This is her revenge.”

“It couldn’t be Julia. She went home for the night. But I’m going to make one last effort. You said once, I remember, that an idea had occurred to you. What was the idea?”

Alice made a restless gesture with her hands.

“And I also said that it was too incredible to be put into words. I repeat that. If it has never occurred to you yourself I will not utter it.”

“It ... it is not Long Alec?”

“Long Alec? Absurd.”

He could not move her and he went back to his own room with his head in a whirl.

“There are only two things I am sure of,” he said, as he watched the beginnings of sunrise. “Twice two are four ... and I’m going to marry Lucia.”

Lucia, it developed, had a different opinion. When Curtis asked her to be his wife she told him that it was utterly impossible.

“Why? Don’t you ... can’t you care for me? I am sure I could make you happy.”

Lucia looked at him with a deepening colour.

“I could ... yes, I could. I owe it to you to tell you that. And there is no use denying it ... one should never deny the truth. But as things are I cannot marry ... you must see that for yourself. I cannot leave Alec and Alice.”

“Alice could come with us. I would be very glad to have such a woman in my home. She would be a constant inspiration to me.”

Which was, perhaps, not the most tactful thing in the world for a wooer to say!

“No. Such an arrangement would not be fair to you. You do not know ...”

It was useless to plead or argue, although Curtis did both. Lucia was a Field, Mrs. Blythe told him, when he carried his woes to her.

“And to think ... if it were not for me,” said Alice bitterly.

“It isn’t only you ... I have told you how glad I would be to have you with us. No, it is just as much Alec ... and those infernal spooks.”

“S-sh ... don’t let Deacon Kirk ... or Mr. Sheldon hear you,” said Alice whimsically. “They would both think ‘infernal’ a most improper word for a minister to use outside of the pulpit. I’m sorry, Mr. Burns ... sorry for you and sorrier for Lucia. I’m afraid she won’t change her mind. We Fields do not, when we have once made it up. Your only hope is to run the ghost to earth.”

Nobody, it seemed, could do that. Curtis bitterly owned himself defeated. Two weeks of moonlit and peaceful nights followed. Mr. Sheldon was again away. When the dark nights returned the manifestations began anew.

This time Curtis seemed to have become the special object of the “ha’nt’s” hatred. Repeatedly he found his sheets wet or well sanded when he got into bed at night. Twice on going to don his ministerial suit on Sunday mornings he found all the buttons cut off. And the special anniversary sermon he had prepared with such care vanished from his desk Saturday night before he had time to memorize it. As a result he made rather a mess of things before a crowded church next day and was young and human enough to feel bitterly about it.

“You’d better go away, Mr. Burns,” advised Alice. “That is unselfish advice if ever any was given, for I shall miss you more than words can say. But you must. Mr. Sheldon told me so and I have heard that Dr. Blythe says it is your only chance. You haven’t Lucia’s phlegm or Alec’s stubbornness ... or even my faith in a locked door. They won’t leave you alone now they have begun on you. Look how they have persecuted Lucia for years.”

“I can’t go away and leave her in such a predicament,” said Curtis stubbornly.

“I believe you are as obstinate as the Fields themselves,” said Alice, with a faint smile. “What good can you do? I really think you’d have a better chance with Lucia if you did go away. She would find out what you really meant to her then ... if you mean anything.”

“Sometimes I think I don’t,” said Curtis despondently.

“Oh, I don’t know. I’ve heard Mrs. Blythe say ...”

“I wish Mrs. Blythe would mind her own business,” said Curtis angrily.

“Well, she won’t ... it isn’t in her. But I mustn’t talk scandal. I seem to be the only person in Mowbray Narrows or Glen St. Mary who doesn’t like Mrs. Blythe ... or any of the Ingleside people. Perhaps I’ve always heard them praised too highly. That sometimes has the effect of turning you against people, don’t you think, Mr. Burns?”

“Yes, very often. But as for Lucia ...”

“Oh, I know you care a great deal for her. But Mr. Burns, don’t expect Lucia to love you as you love her. The Fields don’t. They are rather cool-blooded, you know. Mrs. Blythe is perfectly right there. And I’ve heard Dr. Blythe said Long Alec had really no more feeling than one of his turnips. Perhaps he never said it ... you know what gossip is, as I’ve said before.

Look at Alec ... he's fond of Edna Pollock ... he'd like to marry her ... but he doesn't lose sleep or appetite over it."

"Wise man!"

"Now you sound like Dr. Blythe. But Lucia is like that, too. She'd make a dear little wife for you ... Mrs. Blythe has been saying that ever since you came here, I'm told ... she'd be faithful and devoted ... who knows that better than I? ... but she won't break her heart over it if she can't marry you."

Curtis scowled.

"You don't like to hear that ... you want to be loved more romantically and passionately. But it's true. Why, they tell me even Dr. Blythe was a second choice. But they are said to be very happy, though once in a while ... but I'm verging on gossip again. But what I've said about the Fields is true. I shouldn't have said it ... they've been kindness itself to me. But I know I can trust you, Mr. Curtis."

There were times when Curtis was compelled to think that Alice was right in her summing up of Lucia. To his ardent nature Lucia did seem too composed and resigned. But the thought of giving her up was torture.

"She's like a little red rose just out of reach ... I *must* reach her," he thought.

He could not bear the thought of seeking another boarding place, although both old Mr. Sheldon and Dr. Blythe strongly advised it. He would see her so seldom then for he knew she would elude his visits. Gossip was already far too busy with their names and Mr. Sheldon was always hinting disapprobation. Curtis ignored his hints and grew a trifle brusque with the old man. He knew Mr. Sheldon had never approved of his boarding at Long Alec's.

His perplexity suddenly received a new twist. One night, returning home late from a meeting in a distant section of his circuit, he stood for a long time at his dormer window before going to bed. He had found a treasured volume on his desk ... a book his dead mother had given him on a boyish birthday ... with half its leaves cut to pieces and ink spilled all over the rest. He was angry with the impatient anger of a man who is buffeted by the blows of an unseen antagonist.

The situation was growing more intolerable every day. Perhaps he had better go ... "This is killing you, Mr. Burns," Dr. Blythe had told him not

so long ago. Everybody seemed in a plot to get him away from the old Field place. Yet he hated to admit defeat. Lucia didn't care for him ... in spite of Mrs. Blythe's assurance ... she avoided him ... he hadn't been able to exchange a word with her for days except at the table. From something Long Alec had said Curtis suspected they wished him to find another domicile.

"It would be a bit easier for her, I guess," Long Alec had said. "She worries over things so."

Well, if she wanted to get rid of him! Curtis was petulant just then. Dr. Blythe had said to him a few days before, "Just pick her up and carry her off. Everything will come right then."

As if the doctor knew anything of the real situation! He did not even sympathize with Alice.

He, Curtis, was a failure in everything ... his sermons were beginning to be flat ... Mr. Sheldon had hinted that and he knew it himself ... he was losing interest in his work. Dr. Blythe had told him so bluntly ... he wished he had never come to Mowbray Narrows.

He leaned out of his window to inhale the scented summer air. The night was rather ghostly. The trees about the farmyard could assume weird, uncertain shapes in such clouded moonlight. Cool, elusive night smells came up from the garden. A car went by ... the Ingleside car ... the doctor had evidently been summoned out on a night call. What a life a doctor's was! Worse than a minister's. Never sure of a decent night's sleep. Yet Dr. Blythe seemed a happy man and his wife was worshipped in Glen St. Mary. They often came to the Mowbray Narrows church, probably out of their friendship for Curtis, as they were ardent Presbyterians.

Curtis felt soothed ... cheered. After all, there must be some way out. In spite of the Epworth Rectory, Curtis had no belief in such manifestations of the supernatural. He was young ... the world was good, just because Lucia and Alice were in it. He wouldn't give up yet awhile. The "ha'nt" would make a mistake sometime and be caught.

The moon suddenly broke out between the parting clouds. Curtis found himself looking through the opposite dormer window into the guest room, the blind of which happened to be up. The room was quite clear to him in the sudden radiance and in the mirror on the wall near the window Curtis saw a face looking at him ... sharply outlined against the darkness which

surrounded it. He saw it only for a moment before the clouds swallowed up the moon but he recognized it. The face was the face of Lucia!

He thought nothing of it then. Doubtless she had heard some noise and had gone to the guest room to investigate.

But when at breakfast the next morning he asked her what had disturbed her she met his gaze with a cool blankness.

"I was not disturbed last night," she said.

"When you went to the guest room window," he explained.

"I wasn't near the guest room last night," she said coolly. "I went to bed very early ... I was very tired ... it was one of Alice's bad days, you know ... and slept soundly all night."

She rose as she spoke and went out. She did not return nor did she make any further reference to the matter. Why had she ... lied? An ugly word but Curtis did not soften it. He had seen her. True, it was but for a moment, in a moonlit mirror, but he knew he was not mistaken. It was Lucia's face ... and she had lied to him! True, it was none of his business why she was there ... but a lie was a lie. Did she walk in her sleep? No, he would have been sure to have been told if she did. There was nothing he had not been told about the Fields, true and untrue, he thought.

Curtis decided to leave Long Alec's. He would board at the station which would be very inconvenient but go he must. He was sick at heart. He no longer wanted to find out who the Field ghost was. He was afraid to find out ... he was afraid he knew, although motive and means were still foggy.

Lucia turned a little pale when he told her but said nothing. Long Alec, in his usual easygoing fashion, agreed that it would be best. He stared a little when Curtis bluntly asked him if his sister had ever been a sleepwalker.

"No," he said, a trifle stiffly. "We've had a lot of things said about us, but never that, as far as I know."

Alice approved with tear-filled eyes.

"Of course you must go," she agreed. "The situation here is impossible for you. I hear that Dr. Blythe says it will drive you out of your mind. For once I agree with him. But oh, what will I do? There's a selfish question for you."

"I'll come to see you often, my dear."

“It won’t be the same. You don’t know what you have meant to me, Curtis. You don’t mind my calling you Curtis, do you? You seem like a young cousin or nephew, or something like that.”

“I’m glad to have you call me Curtis.”

“You are a dear boy. I ought to be glad you are going. This accursed house is no place for you. When do you go?”

“In a week ... after I come back from District Meeting.”

Curtis missed his regular train after the meeting ... missed it hunting for a book in the bookstore Alice wanted to see. He fell in with Dr. Blythe who, it happened, had the book, and promised to lend it to Miss Harper.

“I hear you are changing your boarding place,” he said. “A wise move, in my opinion.”

“I leave it with its mystery still unsolved,” said Curtis bitterly.

Dr. Blythe smiled ... that smile that Curtis had never liked.

“Saints are often too wise for us common folk,” he said. “But I think it will be solved some day.”

Curtis came back on the owl train that dumped him off at Glen St. Mary at one o’clock. It did not stop as a rule but Curtis knew the conductor, who was an obliging man.

Henry Kildare got off, too. He had expected to go on to Lowbridge, not having the advantage of a pull with the conductor.

“What a thing it is to be a minister!” he said, laughing. “Well, it is only three miles to Cousin Ellen’s. I can hoof it easily,” he said as they left the platform.

“Might as well come along to Long Alec’s for the rest of the night,” suggested Curtis.

“Not me,” said Henry emphatically. “I wouldn’t stay another night in that house for half my pile. I hear you’re getting out, preacher. Wise boy!”

Curtis did not answer. He was not desirous of any company on his walk, much less Henry Kildare’s. He strode along in moody silence, unheeding Henry’s unending stream of conversation ... if conversation it could be called. Henry liked to hear himself talk.

It was a night of high winds and heavy clouds, with outbursts of brilliant moonlight between them. Curtis felt wretched, hopeless, discouraged. He had failed to solve the mystery he had tackled so cocksurely ... he had failed to win his love or rescue her ... he had ...

“Yes, I’m going to get out of this and hike back to the Coast,” Henry was saying. “There ain’t any sense in hanging around Mowbray Narrows any longer. I can’t get the girl I want.”

So Henry had love troubles of his own.

“Sorry,” said Curtis automatically.

“Sorry! It’s a case to be sorry! Preacher, I don’t mind talking to you about it. You seem like a human being ... and you’ve been a mighty good friend to Alice.”

“Alice!” Curtis was amazed. “Do you mean ... is it Miss Harper?”

“Sure thing. Never was anyone else in my life ... well, not really. Preacher, I’ve always worshipped the ground she walked on. Years ago, when I was working for old Winthrop Field, I was crazy mad about her. She never knew it. I didn’t think I could ever get her, of course. She was one of the aristocratic Fields and I was a hired boy. But I never forgot her ... never could get really interested in anybody else. When I made my pile I says to myself, ‘Now I’m going straight back to P.E. Island and if Alice Harper isn’t married yet I’ll see if she’ll have me.’ You see, I’d never heard from Mowbray Narrows for years ... never heard of Alice’s accident. I thought it likely she’d be married but there was a chance. Preacher, it was an awful jolt when I came home and found her like she is. And the worst of it is I’m just as fond of her as ever ... too fond of her to take up with anybody else ... though there’s a girl at the Glen ... but never mind about that. Since I can’t get Alice I don’t want to marry anyone else ... though Mrs. Blythe says ... but never mind that. And me wanting to marry, with lots of cash to give my woman the dandiest house at the Coast. Deuced hard luck, ain’t it? Excuse me. I always forget I’m talking to a minister when I’m with you. Never forgot it with old Mr. Sheldon. But then he is a saint.”

Curtis agreed that it was hard luck. Privately he thought it did not matter much, as far as Henry Kildare was concerned, whether Alice could or could not marry. Surely she could never care for this brusque, boastful man.

But there was real feeling in Kildare’s voice and Curtis felt very sympathetic just then with anyone who loved in vain.

“What’s that in the Field orchard?” demanded Henry in a startled tone.

Curtis saw it at the same moment. The moon had burst out and the orchard was day-clear in its radiance. A slender, light-clad figure stood among the trees.

“Good Lord, maybe it’s the spook!” said Henry.

As he spoke the figure began to run. Curtis voicelessly bounded over the fence in pursuit.

After a second’s hesitation Henry followed him.

“No preacher is going where I dassn’t follow him,” he muttered.

He caught up with Curtis just as the other rounded the corner of the house and the object of their pursuit darted through the front door.

Curtis had a sickening flash of conviction that the solution of the mystery which had seemed within his grasp had again evaded him.

Then a wild gust of wind swept through the hall of the house ... the heavy door clanged shut with a bang ... and caught in it hard and fast was the skirt of the fleeing figure’s garment.

Curtis and Henry bounded up the steps ... clutched the dress ... flung open the door ... confronted the woman inside.

“Good God!” cried Henry.

“You! You!” said Curtis in a terrible voice. “You!”

Alice Harper looked at him, her face distorted with rage and hatred.

“You dog!” she hissed venomously.

“It’s been you ...” gasped Curtis. “*You* all the time ... you ... you devil ... you ...”

“Easy on, preacher.” Henry Kildare closed the door softly. “Remember you’re speaking to a lady ...”

“A ...”

“A lady,” repeated Henry firmly. “Don’t let us have too much of a fuss. We don’t want to disturb the rest of the folks. Let’s go in the parlour here and talk this matter over quiet-like.”

Curtis did as he was told. In the daze of the moment he would probably have done anything he was told. Henry followed with his hand on Alice’s arm and closed the door.

Alice confronted them defiantly. Amid all Curtis’ bewil-derment one idea came out clearly in his confusion of thought.

How much Alice looked like Lucia! In daylight the difference of colouring kept the resemblance hidden. In the moonlit room it was clearly

seen.

Curtis was shaken with the soul sickness of a horrible disillusionment. He tried to say something but Henry Kildare interrupted.

“Preacher, you’d better let me handle this. You’ve had a bit of a shock.”

A bit of a shock!

“Sit down there,” said Henry kindly. “Alice, you take the rocking chair.”

Both obeyed. Kildare seemed suddenly changed into a quiet, powerful fellow whom it would be well to obey.

“Here, Alice, my dear.” He wheeled a rocking chair out from the corner and put her gently into it.

She sat gazing at the both of them, a beautiful woman in the kind moonlight, the pale blue silk of her wrapper falling about her slender form in graceful folds.

Curtis wished he might wake up. This was the worst nightmare he had ever had ... it *must* be a nightmare. Nothing like this could be true.

Henry seated himself calmly on the sofa and leaned forward.

“Now, Alice, my dear, tell us all about it. You have to, you know. Then we’ll see what can be done. The game’s up, you know. You can’t expect us to keep this a secret.”

“Oh, I know. But I’ve had five glorious years. Nothing can rob me of that. Oh, I’ve ruled them ... from my ‘sickbed’ I’ve ruled them. I pulled the strings and they danced ... my puppets! Black Lucia and condescending Alec ... and that lovesick boy there! All but the Blythes. I knew they had suspicions but they couldn’t prove them ... they didn’t even dare voice them.”

“Yes, it must have been fun,” agreed Henry. “But why, Alice, my dear?”

“I was sick of being patronized and snubbed and condescended to,” said Alice bitterly. “That is what my youth was. You know that well enough, Henry Kildare.”

“Yes, I had a good idea of it,” agreed Henry.

“I was just the poor relation,” said Alice. “Why, when they had company I often had to wait and eat afterwards.”

“Only when the table wasn’t big enough,” said Henry.

“No! It was because I wasn’t thought good enough to talk to their company! I was only good enough to lay the table and cook the food. I hated every one of them ... but Lucia most of all.”

“Come, come, now, I used to think Lucia was uncommon nice to you.”

“Like a man! *She* was the petted darling. Her father wouldn’t let the winds of heaven visit her too roughly. I slept in a dark, stuffy back room. She had the sunny look-out. She was four years younger than I was ... but she thought she was my superior in everything.”

“Come, come, now, didn’t you imagine a good deal of that?” asked Henry mildly.

“No, I did not! When she was invited to Ingleside, was I ever asked, too?”

“But people all thought you hated them.”

“I did, too. And Lucia was sent away to school. No one ever thought of educating me. Yet I was far cleverer than she was.”

“Clever, yes,” agreed Henry, with a curious emphasis. “But the teachers always said you wouldn’t try to learn.”

Curtis felt that he should not let Alice say such things of Lucia but a temporary paralysis seemed to have descended upon him. It *was* a dream ... a nightmare ... one couldn’t ...

“Uncle Winthrop was always saying sarcastic things to me. I remember them ... every one. Do you remember them, Henry?”

“Yes. The old chap had a habit that way. He was the same with everybody. He didn’t mean much by it. But I did think the old chap wasn’t as nice to you as he might have been. But your aunt was good to you.”

“She slapped me one day before company.”

“Yes ... but you had sassed her.”

“I hated her after that,” said Alice, ignoring his words. “I never spoke a word to her for ten weeks. *And she never noticed it.* One day, when I was nineteen, she said, ‘I was married at your age.’”

“I heard her say the same thing to Nan Blythe.”

“Whose fault was it that I was not married?” said Alice, who seemed determined not to hear anything Henry said.

“You seemed to hate going about with other young people,” he protested.

“I wasn’t as well dressed as they were. I knew they looked down on me for it.”

“Nonsense! That was just your imagination.”

“Laura Gregor taunted me once with living on charity,” retorted Alice, her voice shaking with passion. “If I had been dressed like Lucia Roy Major would have noticed me.”

“I remember the Carman girls had old gingham dresses on that night,” reflected Henry.

“I was shabby ... dowdy ... he didn’t want to be seen with me. I ... I loved him ... I would have done anything to win him.”

“I remember how jealous I was of him,” said Henry reflectively. “And there wasn’t any real need. He was crazy mad about Amy Carr ... and a dozen other girls afterwards. What fools young people can be!”

Alice swept on as if she had not heard him.

“When Marian Lister told me that she and Roy were going to be married and asked me to be her bridesmaid I could have killed her. She did it on purpose to hurt me.”

“Nonsense again. She had no other girl friends. And if you felt like that why did you consent?”

“Because I was determined she should not suspect and triumph over me. I thought my heart would break the day of the wedding. I prayed that God would give me the power to avenge my suffering on somebody.”

“You poor kid,” said Henry pityingly. Curtis felt only sickening aversion.

“That was my life for twenty years. Then I fell from the loft. I was paralyzed at first. For months I couldn’t move. Then I found I could. But I wouldn’t. An idea had come to me. I had found a way to punish ... and rule them. Oh, how I laughed when I thought of it!”

Alice laughed again. Curtis remembered that he had never heard her laugh before. There was something unpleasant in it which reminded him of the haunted nights. And yet it vaguely resembled Lucia’s laughter. The thought was hateful to him.

“My idea worked well. I was afraid I could not deceive the doctors. But it was easy ... so easy. I could never have believed it was so easy to fool supposedly intelligent and educated people. How I laughed to myself as they consulted over me with solemn faces! I never complained, I must be patient, saintly, heroic. Uncle Winthrop had several specialists. He had to spend some money on his despised niece at last ... as much as would have sufficed to send me to Queen’s. They were all easy to hoodwink except Dr.

Blythe. I always felt that he ... a plain country doctor in consultation with men from Montreal and New York ... was vaguely suspicious. He always has been. So I said no more doctors.

"The household waited on me hand and foot. Oh, how I gloried in feeling such power over them ... I whom they had disdained. I had never been of any importance to them."

"You were of importance to me," said Henry.

"Was I really? You hid it well."

"I suppose you would never have thought of a hired boy presuming to fall in love with a Field!"

"I wish Uncle Winthrop had known. He would have taken the hide off you."

"Oh, no, he wouldn't. I could fight then as well as now. But of course he would have sent me away. And I couldn't bear the thought of being parted from you."

"Really, I was of more importance than I knew," said Alice sarcastically. "It was rather a pity you didn't tell me. I might have ... recovered ... and married you to humiliate them. Well, at any rate, I was the most important person in the house now. Lucia came home to wait on me. She thought it her 'duty.' Lucia always took herself very seriously."

Curtis made a quick movement but Henry put out a restraining hand. Alice shot a malicious glance at him.

"People said my patience was angelic. They began to call me the angel of Mowbray Narrows. I never heard that Dr. Blythe did so, though. Once I did not speak a word for four days. The household was terribly alarmed. And I made Lucia rub my back and shoulders every night for half an hour. It was excellent exercise for her and amused me. Some days I pretended to suffer horribly. Had the room darkened, moaned occasionally for hours. I had those attacks whenever I thought Lucia needed a little discipline."

"Then I discovered that Alec wanted to marry Edna Pollock."

"Why should you have cared if he did?"

"Why, it wouldn't have suited me at all. Lucia would be free to go then ... and Edna Pollock would not have waited on me properly. Besides, a Pollock was not good enough for a Field. I have my share of the family pride, after all, you see, my dear Mr. Burns. Then the idea of playing spook came to me."

“Ah, now we’re coming to the interesting part,” said Henry. “How in the name of the Old Nick did you manage those stunts, locked in your room?”

“There is a closet in my room ... and its back wall is not plastered. It is merely a partition of boards between the closet and the alcove where the garret stairs are. When I was a child I discovered that two of those boards could be easily and noiselessly slipped back. I kept it a secret ... I liked to know something nobody else of all the wise Fields knew.”

“Fancy, now,” said Henry, as if he rather admired her cleverness in keeping a secret.

“It was very easy to slip in and out through that space. Nobody ever suspected me with my locked door.”

Again Curtis felt a sickening sensation. How easily they had all been fooled!

“But how could you get out of the garret?” asked Henry. “There is only one way up and down.”

“Haven’t I told you people are easy to fool? Yes, even the astute Dr. Blythe.”

“Let’s leave Dr. Blythe out of it. Just answer my questions.”

“There’s a big chest up there supposed to be packed full of quilts. Old Grandmother Field left them to me ... so nobody ever disturbed them. But it isn’t really full. There is quite a space between the quilts and the back of the chest. I used to slip in there. Nobody could ever get up the garret stairs without my hearing them. Two of the steps creaked.”

“Do they do that yet? I remember they did in my time. I had to sleep up there, you remember.”

“I never stepped on those creaky steps. When I heard anyone coming I slipped into the chest, shut the lid, and pulled one of those thick woollen quilts over my head. Dozens of people lifted the lid of that chest ... saw it apparently full of woollen quilts ... and shut the lid again. Dr. Blythe did it several times ... dear Mr. Burns here did it twice, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” said Curtis miserably.

“And I was in it laughing at him! Oh, they were all such fools! But I was clever ... you can’t deny that.”

“A durn sight too clever,” said Henry.

“And I was a good actress. When I was a girl my ambition was to go on the stage. I could have managed it somehow. But you know what the idea

of the stage was to a good Methodist. Perhaps it still is. I suppose Mr. Burns could tell you ... though he has almost lost the power of speech, it seems.”

“I understand how old Winthrop Field would look at it,” said Henry. “But you always were a good actress.”

“Ah, you admit that. And I could have been a great one. Don’t you admit that, Mr. Burns? But how contemptuous everyone was! ‘Do you suppose you could act, girl?’ a school-teacher jeered at me once. I wonder what he would think now. It was amusing to terrify people with an imitation of Uncle Winthrop’s laugh. I could mimic it and his voice to the life ... his and Anna Marsh’s ... anybody’s.”

“You were always a good mimic,” agreed Henry. “But how did you rock the cradle after it was taken away?”

“I never touched the cradle ... even when it was there. I made a rocking noise by wriggling a loose board in the floor. I could easily manipulate it without getting out of the chest.”

“But you must have taken a lot of chances.”

“Of course I did. That was part of the fun. Dozens of times I was almost caught ... especially the nights when Dr. Blythe watched. He was the only one I really feared. But even he wasn’t a match for me. I didn’t often play tricks on moonlight nights. Once for fun I climbed a ladder and walked along the flat ridge roof of the barn. But that was too dangerous. I was seen by some passer-by. Sometimes when people watched I did nothing. At other times it amused me to outwit them. Generally I slid down the banister. It was quicker and quieter.”

“I remember seeing you do that when you were a kid,” mused Henry. “You used to go like greased lightning. But old Winthrop didn’t think it ladylike, did he?”

“Lucia would never have done such a thing,” sneered Alice. “I never made any noise below stairs till I was through for the night,” continued Alice, who was plainly enjoying her confession. What fun it was to shock Curtis Burns! It seemed to surprise her that Henry Kildare took it all so coolly.

“I never did anything without planning out a way of escape beforehand. There were plenty of hiding places if I could not get back to the closet in time.”

“What about the violin? How did you get it without Lucia’s knowing?”

“Oh, it wasn’t Lucia’s. Don’t you remember that old fiddle of yours you left here when you went away?”

“By the nine gods I’d forgotten all about that!”

“I hid it behind the closet boards. When people began to suspect Lucia ... or rather hint things ... I raved so vehemently that they thought I protested too much. And yet every word I said was true.”

Alice laughed again.

“What about those bloody footprints and the curses?” demanded Henry. Curtis wished he would stop asking questions and go away.

“Oh, the Fields kept so many hens they never counted them. The curses cost me some pains of composition. But I found some very effective ones in the Bible. ‘There shall not be an old man in thine house.’ Can you tell me where that is found, Mr. Burns? I believe I really know my Bible better than you do. That especial curse made Alec think he was going to die young. Some of the Fields have always been a little superstitious.”

“Was it you cut Maggie Eldon’s hair?”

“Of course. For once she forgot to lock her door. So excited over George MacPherson driving her home from class meeting, I suppose. I wanted Julia back. She did not keep the late hours Maggie did.”

“And to think you were never caught!” marvelled Henry ... still admiringly.

“One night I thought I was caught at last,” said Alice, with another malicious glance at the stunned Curtis. “I thought you saw the reflection of my face in the guest room window.”

Curtis made no reply.

“Of course my greatest amusement was to torment Lucia,” said Alice. “When I cut down the birch tree she loved every blow was a delight to me.”

Still Curtis made no sign. Alice continued to address him, however.

“I was really glad when you came here to board. I liked a young minister. Old Mr. Sheldon bored me to tears. It seemed as if the Conference always sent us old ministers. As long as his wife lived there was some amusement in making him worship at my shrine, for old as they were she was jealous of his devotion to me.”

“Is a woman ever too old to be jealous?” murmured Henry reflectively.

“Never,” said Alice decisively. “Nor a man either. But when she died and nobody cared how much he revered my saintliness I didn’t want his reverence. And I was not afraid of you. I knew you would be just as easily fooled as the rest.”

Curtis did flinch at this. It was so disgustingly true.

“I decided that I would keep quiet for a while so that you would not become disgusted and leave us. I never supposed you would fall in love with Lucia. Men, as a rule, never cared for her. And gossip engaged you to somebody else. It was very amusing to talk seriously to you about our ghosts.”

Her laughter made Curtis flinch again. The power of feeling was returning to him.

“And then you went and spoiled everything by going and falling in love with my lady cousin ... who had set her cap for you ever since you came here. Oh, yes, she did ...” as an impatient sound came from Henry. “So I decided you must go. I knew Lucia was secretly crazy about you ... though, like all the Fields, she can hide her feelings very successfully when she wants to.”

“Miss Field cares nothing for me,” cried Curtis, stung into speech.

“Oh, yes, she does. And I was afraid her feelings would win out at last. And yet, do you know, when you told me you were going, my tears of regret were very real ones. You have no idea how much I really liked you.”

Alice laughed again. Her eyes were sparkling in the moonlight.

“How did you manage the telephone business?” asked the persistent Henry.

“Oh, that! I had nothing to do with that. Some boys along the line must have been playing a trick for the fun of it. They often do ... but nobody takes any account of it in a house that isn’t supposed to be haunted. But it helped matters on nicely.”

“And ... and ... the money ...” hesitated Henry.

“I didn’t take it either. What good would it have been to me? ... and the Fields are not thieves. Without a doubt some of the Marsh gang did it ... not Julia perhaps. I don’t think she is a thief. But she has a brother.”

“The ... the binder house?”

“I didn’t set fire to it, you goose. Do you think I’d have no more sense than to risk burning my own home down? Most likely it was some

prowling tramp ... anyway I know nothing of it.”

“Come, now, I’m glad to hear that,” said Henry in a tone of relief. “Somehow, *that* kind of stuck in my crop. Now I see my way. And you really can walk as well as anyone?”

“Of course I can. I’ve had enough exercise at nights to keep well in practice in walking. Well, what are you going to do, gentlemen, my judges?”

“I guess we don’t set up as judges,” said Henry. “What do you say, preacher?”

“I ... I have nothing to do with the matter,” stammered Curtis.

“You’ll tell silly Alec and little black Lucia anyway, I suppose, and have me turned out on the road.”

“You know they wouldn’t do that.”

“Do you suppose I’d live here now, even if they’d let me?” flashed Alice. “I’d starve first.”

“Why, no, you ain’t going to starve,” said Henry soothingly. “The preacher here can tell Alec and Lucia ... I’m not hankering for *that* job. It’s you I’m concerned with. Do you know what I’m going to do?”

“No,” said Alice indifferently.

“I’m going to marry you and take you away. That’s what I came home to do.”

Alice sat up in amazement and even Curtis was stirred out of his stupor.

“Do you ... mean that?” said Alice slowly.

“I do. When I came home I supposed I couldn’t since you were bedrid. But since you ain’t, what’s to hinder?”

“But ... how can you want me now?” said Alice, with a sparkle rising in her eyes.

“I don’t know, but I do ... by the nine gods I do,” said Henry emphatically. “I don’t care what you’ve done. Even if you’d taken the money and burned the binder house I’d have wanted you ... though it *would* have made a difference. You’re the girl I’ve wanted all my life and I’m going to have you. I’ll take you out to the Coast ... you need never see any of the folks round here again.”

“Will you take me away from here tonight ... now?” demanded Alice.

“Sure,” said Henry. “We’ll go right to the station. It’ll be time for the train when we get there. We’ll go into Charlottetown and be married as

soon as I can get the licence. Some of the town preachers will do it. I reckon you ain't hankering for the job, preacher?"

"No ... no," said Curtis with a shudder. Alice looked at him with contempt.

"And you'll tell the folks here what is necessary?"

"I s... I suppose so," said poor Curtis.

Henry bent forward and tapped Alice gently on the shoulder.

"Well, that's settled. I'll house and dress you like a queen ... but listen, my girl, listen."

"Now for the conditions," said Alice.

"The conditions don't amount to much. It's just that there's to be no more tricks ... no tricks with Henry Kildare. Understand?"

"I ... understand," said Alice.

"Go upstairs and get ready."

Alice looked down at her wrapper.

"Got anything to wear besides that?"

"I have my old navy blue suit and hat," said Alice meekly. "They're horribly out of style but ..."

"That don't matter. We can get something as soon as the stores open."

Alice rose and left the room.

"Well, preacher, what have you got to say?" demanded Henry when she had left the room.

"Nothing," said Curtis.

Henry nodded.

"Best line to take, I guess. This is one of the things there don't seem to be any language to fit and that's a fact. But gosh, wasn't she clever! Mowbray Narrows will have something to talk about for years. I knew Dr. Blythe thought there was something screwy about it all but even he didn't suspect the whole truth."

Alice came down. Her suit fitted her as if made yesterday, her face was flushed with triumph.

Curtis did not speak a word when she passed him in the hall.

"Hate me ... despise me," she said passionately. "I don't mind your hate ... but I won't have your tolerance. And when you marry Lucia remember there is one person in the world who hopes you'll rue it to your dying day. Lucia isn't the paragon you imagine her by any means. She'll rule you ..."

you'll always dance to her piping. Good-bye, my dear Mr. Curtis Burns. It may be some comfort to you to know that you have solved the Field mystery after all, though it was only by accident."

"Come on," said Henry. "We haven't too much time as it is. And from this day, Alice Harper, I forbid you to mention this matter to me or anyone. It's dead ... and we'll bury it. In a few years it will all be forgotten. And don't let me hear any sneers at Mr. Burns. He's one of the best. Good-bye, preacher. It was a lucky chance we missed that train. And don't be too hard in your judgments of folks you don't know much about."

Mr. Sheldon came up to the old Field place the next night, having heard the incredible rumour that flew like a flame through Mowbray Narrows and Glen St. Mary.

Dr. Blythe had been the one to tell him and had said,

"I always thought she had something to do with the goings-on but I confess my imagination didn't stretch so far. I never believed she was quite so helpless as she pretended but I admit I thought she was in league with Jock or Julia."

"I never could endure her," said Anne Blythe emphatically. "There was something in her eyes ... and I knew she hated Lucia."

"These women!" said the doctor, shaking his head.

Mr. Sheldon listened to Curtis' story and shook his silvery head, too.

"Well, I suppose after a time I'll get this through my old noodle and accept it. Just at present I can't believe it. That's all. We've dreamed it ... we're dreaming still."

"I think we all feel like that," said Curtis. "Alec and Lucia have gone about in a helpless daze all day. They are too stunned to be even angry."

"What hurts me worst," said Mr. Sheldon tremulously, "is her ... hypocrisy. She pretended to be so interested in our church ... our work."

"That may not have been hypocrisy, Mr. Sheldon. It may have been a real side of her warped nature."

"So Dr. Blythe says. But to me it is incredible."

"Nothing is incredible with abnormality. Dr. Blythe would tell you that, too. Remember you cannot judge her as you would a normal person."

"She always seemed normal enough."

"She has never been normal. Her own story proves that. She was hampered by heredity. Her father and grandfather were dipsomaniacs. You

can't reform your ancestors. And the shock of repressed feeling at the wedding of the man she loved evidently played havoc in her soul."

"So Dr. Blythe says. But poor Henry Kildare!"

"Oh, not so poor. We've always misjudged Henry. A man doesn't amass a fortune on the Coast without brains. He's got the woman he always wanted."

"But what a life ..."

"Not a bit of it. Alice can be very charming when she wants to be. You and I ought to realize that, Mr. Sheldon. Take my word for it, he'll manage her. Besides, marriage and a home and wealth ... all she always craved ... may have a very salutary effect on her mind ..."

Mr. Sheldon shook his head. The whole thing was beyond him.

"However," said Curtis, "we may be sure of one thing. She'll never come back to show off her diamonds in Mowbray Narrows."

"Mrs. Blythe says she is quite capable of that."

"Mrs. Blythe is mistaken. No, we've seen the last of Alice Harper and Henry Kildare. Don't think this hasn't been a shock to me, Mr. Sheldon. It's the worst I ever had."

"I fancy there will be compensations," said Mr. Sheldon slyly. "Mrs. Blythe says ..."

"I've heard the Blythes quoted in this matter until I'm tired of it," said Curtis, a little rudely. "After all, they were only suspicious. They didn't really know any more than the rest of us. But now I suppose people will say they knew all about it all the time."

"Well, you know how legends grow. And really Mrs. Blythe has a wonderful insight into character."

"Well, we'll leave it at that. And, Mr. Sheldon, let us make a compact. Let us agree never to mention this matter to each other again."

Mr. Sheldon agreed, a little disappointedly. There were so many things he wanted to know. But he was not without tact and he saw Lucia Field coming up the lane.

When Curtis came back from the gate in the twilight he came face to face with Lucia in the porch. He had hardly seen her all day, since he had stammered forth his tale in the morning twilight. But now he caught her exultantly.

“Sweetheart ... you’ll listen to me now ... you will ... you will,” he whispered.

Jock was coming across the yard and Lucia twisted herself from his grasp and ran. But before she ran Curtis caught a look in her eyes. He was suddenly a very happy man.

“What will Dr. Blythe say?” he wondered. He knew quite well what Mrs. Blythe would say.

Twilight at Ingleside

In the family circle at Ingleside, Anne Blythe, nee Anne Shirley, sometimes reads her occasional poems to the family circle at twilight, including Susan Baker, the assistant house-keeper who has been with them so long that she seems as one of them. Before her marriage Anne wrote occasional stories but gave this up when her children were babies. But she writes a poem now and then and reads it to her family, who sit around and listen, making no comments until the end.

DR. BLYTHE *thinks*:- “I wonder if we grown-ups play enough. There is Susan ... she makes a perfect slave of herself to the children. But perhaps it is play to her.”

SUSAN, *who disapproves of Walter writing poetry in the highest degree, but thinks everything Mrs. Blythe does is right, thinks*:- “I don’t think much of dreaming but it is nice for someone to need you, I’ll admit that. And they *do* need me here ... Shirley, anyhow. A family of five children and a house as big as Ingleside need more than one woman and that I will tie to.”

WALTER BLYTHE *thinks*:- “A great big pearl swinging above your door. I’ll always think of that when I see the full moon. I wish I could write as good poetry as mother does. Perhaps I will when I’m as old. I’m twelve now. It takes a long while to grow up.”

DR. GILBERT BLYTHE *thinks*:- ““A little house with friendly rafters.’ That was how I used to think of our House of Dreams when I took Anne there as a bride sixteen years ago. A man’s first ‘home of his own’ is something he never forgets. But *I* would write, ‘Whenever you want to swear alone.’”

SUSAN *again*:- “I always did like the smell of mint. But the less said about witches before the children in my humble opinion the better. As for fools ... we all have plenty of chances to be fools ... and we take them.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “We’ll all have to hear the Fiddler some day, I suppose. What will Anne and I look like when we grow old? I’ll be bald and double-chinned ... but she will always be Anne to me.”

JEM BLYTHE *aloud*:- “Gosh, you *can* write poetry, all right, mums.”

I WISH YOU

*Friend o' mine, in the year oncoming
I wish you a little time for play,
And an hour to dream in the eerie gloaming
After the clamorous day.
(And the moon like a pearl from an Indian shore
To hang for a lantern above your door.)*

*A little house with friendly rafters
And someone in it to need you there,
Wine of romance and wholesome laughs
With a comrade or two to share.
(And some secret spot of your very own
Whenever you want to cry alone.)*

*I wish you a garden on fire with roses,
Columbines planted for your delight,
Scent of mint in its shadowy closes,
Clean gay winds at night.
(Some nights for sleeping and some to ride
With the broomstick witches far and wide.)*

*A goodly crop of figs to gather,
With a thistle or two to prick or sting,
Since a harvesting too harmless is rather
An unadventurous thing.
(And now and then, spite of reason or rule,
The chance to be a bit of a fool.)*

*I wish you a thirst that can never be sated
For all the loveliness earth can yield,
Slim, cool birches whitely mated*

*Dawn on an April field.
(And never too big a bill to pay
When the Fiddler finds he must up and away.)*

Anne Blythe

THE OLD PATH ROUND THE SHORE

*It winds beneath the shadow where the Druid fir trees lean
And through their parting boughs I see the harbour's purple screen.
Winds from the west are blowing o'er the mid-sea's purple skin,
And in the sunset distance the boats are coming in,
White-winged across the foam line of the misty, moaning bar,
And further still adown the coast shines out the lighthouse star.
'Tis just the same as when we walked together there of yore
But something's gone forever from the old path round the shore.*

*Here everything still speaks of you ... the waters lisp your name,
My listening heart repeats it as it used to when you came.
Your laughter in the breezes rings more clearly than your own,
The whispers in the fir boughs seem the echo of your tone,
The summer skies above the sea are as your deep eyes blue
The sweet wild roses on the bank are waiting, dear, for you.
But rose and lover wait in vain for you will come no more
To walk, the world forgetting, on the old path round the shore.*

*And I must go my way alone adown the shining strand,
And miss the kisses of your lips, the pressure of your hand,
And watch with lonely eyes the gleam of purple seas afar,
And shadowy sails that drift across the misty harbour bar;
I wonder if in distant lands where rarer roses blow,
You ever think of me and of those moments long ago,
And if did fate permit it you would gladly come once more
And walk with me at sunset on the old path round the shore.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- "Who were you thinking of when you wrote that,
Anne?"

ANNE:- “Gilbert, if you keep on speaking in such a jealous tone I’ll give up reading my poems to you. This one was written ages ago and was prompted by the love story of Mary Royce. Don’t you remember? And of course the old path round the shore was the one at Avonlea. I’m sure you and I walked it often enough.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Yes, we did. And my heart ached often enough after you had let somebody else walk home with you the night before.”

SUSAN baker (*over her darning, thinks*):- “The very idea of her letting anyone walk home with her when she might have had the doctor! I have never had a real beau but boys *have* walked home with me time and again. I wasn’t entirely overlooked. It doesn’t seem to have the significance today that it had then, though. Nowadays the girls run around with anybody.”

GUEST ROOM IN THE COUNTRY

*Old friend, who art my guest tonight,
The moonshine makes your pillow white,
A low wind at the eaves will sing
Of many a secret far-off thing ...
Blue hills where shining fountains hide,
Dim shores that love the creeping tide ...
And may a cool whiff of the dew
Come in to minister to you.*

*There will be leafy rumours still
About your open window sill.
And in the silence you may hear
A grey owl calling to his dear,
Or catch from where you lie a spark
Of goblin firefly in the dark ...
And may you learn with certainty
What a good friend a bed can be.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “I’ll say it is when you’re dead beat. And yet ... I’ve been in some guest rooms ... whew!”

SUSAN BAKER:- “I should say so! They say that anyone who sleeps in Mrs. Abel Sawyer’s spare room, Mrs. Dr. dear, catches his death with damp sheets in summer and too few blankets in winter. Well, thank heaven, they can’t say that of our spare room here.”

An Afternoon with Mr. Jenkins

Timothy yawned. If eight years knew anything about such a word, Timothy was bored. Saturday was a rather stupid day at any time and he could not go down to the Glen. He was not allowed to go out of the home grounds when his aunts were away ... not even to Ingleside to play with Jem Blythe. Of course, Jem could come up to his aunts' place as often as he pleased but Jem often had other fish to fry on Saturday afternoons and Timothy never was allowed away from home alone now at all. His aunts had been more fussy than ever about this lately.

Timothy was very fond of his aunts, especially his Aunt Edith, but he secretly thought they were entirely *too* fussy about it. He couldn't understand it. Surely a big boy of eight, who had been going to school two years alone, even if he didn't altogether like going to sleep in the dark, didn't need to be cooped up at home just because his aunts had gone to Charlottetown.

They had gone that morning early and Timothy felt sure they were worried. More than usual, that is, for they were always worried over something. Timothy didn't know what it was, but he sensed it in everything they did or said of late. It hadn't been so years ago, Timothy reflected with the air of an octogenarian recalling his youth. He could remember them as laughing and jolly, especially Aunt Edith, who was really very jolly for an old maid, as the boys in school called her. And they were great friends with the Ingleside people and thought Dr. and Mrs. Blythe the finest people in the world.

But they had laughed less and less these past two years, and Timothy had an odd feeling that this was somehow connected with him, although he couldn't understand how that could be. He wasn't a bad boy. Not even

Aunt Kathleen, who, perhaps because she was a widow, thought rather poorly of boys, ever said he was a bad boy. And Jem Blythe had told him that Susan Baker had said he was really one of the best-behaved boys she knew, outside of the Ingleside group.

Now and then, of course ... but it was hard to be perfect. Why, then, did they worry so about him? Maybe just because they were women. Maybe women had to worry. But Mrs. Blythe seemed to worry very little and Susan Baker not much more. So why?

Men, now ... he never perceived that Dr. Blythe worried. If father had lived! But in that case he, Timothy, might not have been living with Aunt Edith in the little place the Glen St. Mary people called "The Corner." And Timothy loved The Corner. He felt sure he could never live anywhere else. But when he said this to Aunt Kathleen one day she had sighed and looked at Aunt Edith.

She hadn't said anything but Aunt Edith had replied passionately,

"I can't believe God could be so unjust. Surely he ... even *he* couldn't be so heartless."

Were they talking about the God whom the Ingleside people said was Love? Even Susan Baker admitted that.

"S-sh," said Aunt Kathleen warningly.

"He'll have to know sometime," said Aunt Edith bitterly.

Why, he knew about God now. Everybody he knew did. So why so much mystery?

"He'll have to know sometime," went on Aunt Edith bitterly. "The ten years will soon be up ... and probably shortened for good behaviour."

Aunt Edith's "he's" puzzled Timothy hopelessly. He knew now it was not God they were talking about. And what would "he" have to know sometime and in any case why should it be all "s-sh-ed" away? Aunt Kathleen immediately began talking about his music lessons and the possibility of securing Professor Harper of Lowbridge as a teacher. Now Timothy hated the very thought of music lessons. Jem Blythe laughed at the mere idea. Yet he knew he would have to take them. Nothing ever made Aunt Kathleen change her mind.

Timothy felt aggrieved. Aunt Edith had promised to take him to the little lake that was a Lowbridge summer resort. They would go in the car ... cars were very new things and Timothy loved riding in them. Dr. Blythe

had one and often gave him a “lift” in it. And at the lake he would be let ride a horse on the merry-go-round ... another thing he loved and very seldom got because Aunt Kathleen did not approve of it. But he knew Aunt Edith would.

But there had been a letter that morning for Aunt Kathleen. She had turned dreadfully pale when she read it. Then she had said something to Aunt Edith in a queer choking voice and Aunt Edith had turned pale, too, and they had gone out of the room. Timothy heard them having a long conversation with Dr. Blythe on the telephone. Was Aunt Kathleen sick?

After a little while Aunt Edith came back and told Timothy she was very sorry but she could not take him to the lake after all. She and Aunt Kathleen must go to Charlotte-town on some very important business. Dr. Blythe was going to take them.

“Then one of you *is* sick?” said Timothy anxiously.

“No, neither of us is sick. It ... it is worse than that,” said Aunt Edith.

“You’ve been crying, Aunt Edith,” said a troubled Timothy. He got up out of his chair and hugged her. “Just you wait till I grow up and when I’m a man nothing’ll ever make you cry.”

And then the tears welled up in Aunt Edith’s sweet brown eyes again.

But Aunt Kathleen was not crying. She was pale and stern. And she told Timothy very shortly and unsympathetically that he must not go outside the gate until they returned.

“Can’t I go down to Ingleside for a little stroll?” implored Timothy. He wanted to buy something for Aunt Edith’s birthday tomorrow. He had a whole quarter saved out of his allowance and he meant to spend it all on her. There were pretty things in Lowbridge but Carter Flagg kept a glass case with some rather nice things in it. Timothy remembered a lace collar he admired.

But Aunt Kathleen was inexorable. Timothy did not sulk. He never sulked, which was more than could be said of even Jem Blythe, although you would have taken your life in your hands if you had said so to Susan Baker. But he put in a rather dismal forenoon. He ran races with Merrylegs. He counted and re-arranged his birds’ eggs, finding a little comfort in the thought that he had more than Jem had. He tried to jump from one gatepost to the other ... and fell in the dust ignominiously. But he would do it some day. He had eaten all the lunch old Linda had set out for

him. He also tried to talk to Linda, for Timothy was a sociable little soul. But Linda was grumpy, too. What was the matter with all the folks that day? Linda was usually good-natured, though he did not like her quite so well as Susan Baker at Ingleside. Timothy could not see how he was going to put in the afternoon.

Well, he would go down to the gate again and watch the cars and buggies going by. That wasn't forbidden anyhow. He wished he had some raisins to eat. Every Sunday afternoon he was given a handful of big, juicy raisins to eat as a "Sunday treat."

But this was only Saturday and when Linda was grumpy there was no use in asking her for anything. Though, if he had but known it, Linda would gladly have given him the raisins today.

"What are you thinking of, son?" asked a voice.

Timothy jumped. Where had the man come from? There hadn't been any sound ... any footstep. Yet there he was, just outside the gate, looking down at him with a peculiar expression on a handsome, sulky, deep-lined face. He wasn't a tramp ... he was too well-dressed for that. And Timothy, who was always feeling things he couldn't have explained, had an idea that he wasn't used to being so well-dressed.

The man's eyes were grey and smouldering and Timothy felt, too, that he was cross about something ... very cross ... cross enough to do anything mean that occurred to him. This certainly must be what Mrs. Dr. Blythe called "a Jonah day."

And yet there was something about the man that Timothy liked.

"I was thinking what a splendid day it would have been for the lake at Lowbridge," he explained, rather stiffly, for he had always been warned not to talk to strangers.

"Oh, the lake! Yes, I remember what a fascinating spot it was for small boys ... though it was not a 'resort' then and a good many people called it the pond. Did you want to go there?"

"Yes. Aunt Edith was going to take me. Then she couldn't. She had to go to town on important business. Dr. Blythe took them."

"Dr. Blythe! Is he still in Glen St. Mary?"

"Yes, but they live at Ingleside now."

"Oh! And is your Aunt Kathleen at home?"

Timothy thawed. This man knew Aunt Kathleen, therefore it was allowable to talk to him.

“No, she went, too.”

“When will they be back?”

“Not till the evening. They went to town to see a lawyer. I heard Linda say so.”

“Oh!” The man reflected a moment and then gave a queer inward chuckle. Timothy didn’t like the sound of it particularly.

“Are you a friend of Aunt Kathleen?” he inquired politely.

The man laughed again.

“A friend. Oh, yes, a very near and dear friend. I’m sure she’d have been delighted to see me.”

“You must call again,” said Timothy persuasively.

“It’s quite likely I shall,” said the man.

He sat down on the big red boulder by the gate, lighted a cigarette with fingers that were strangely rough and callous, and looked Timothy over in a cool, appraising manner.

A trim little lad ... well set up ... curly brown hair ... dreamy eyes and a good chin.

“Whom do you look like, boy?” he said abruptly. “Your dad?”

Timothy shook his head.

“No. I wish I did. But I don’t know what he looked like. He’s dead ... and there isn’t any picture.”

“There wouldn’t be,” said the man. Again Timothy didn’t like it.

“My dad was a very brave man,” he said quickly. “He was a soldier in the Boer War and he won the Distinguished Service Medal.”

“Who told you that?”

“Aunt Edith. Aunt Kathleen won’t talk of him ever. Aunt Edith won’t either ... much ... but she told me that.”

“Edith was always a bit of a good scout,” muttered the man. “You don’t look like your ... your ... mother either.”

“No, I can see that. I have a picture of mother. She died when I was born. Aunt Edith says I look like Grandfather Norris ... her father. I’m called after him.”

“Are your aunts good to you?” asked the man.

“They are,” said Timothy emphatically. He would have said the same thing if they had not been. Timothy had a fine sense of loyalty. “Of course ... you know ... they’re bringing me up. I have to be scolded sometimes ... and I have to take music lessons ...”

“You don’t like that,” said the man, amused.

“No. But I guess maybe it’s good discipline.”

“You have a dog, I see,” said the man, indicating Merrylegs. “Good breed, too. I thought Kathleen and Edith never liked dogs.”

“They don’t. But they let me have one because Dr. Blythe said every boy ought to have a dog. So my aunts gave in. They don’t even say anything when he sleeps on my bed at nights. They don’t approve of it, you know, but they let him stay. I’m glad because I don’t like going to sleep in the dark.”

“Do they make you do that?”

“Oh, it’s all right,” said Timothy quickly. He wasn’t going to have anyone imagine that he was finding fault with his aunts. “I’m quite old enough to go to sleep in the dark. Only ... only ...”

“Yes?”

“It’s only that when the light goes out I can’t help imagining faces looking in at the window ... awful faces ... hateful faces. I heard Aunt Kathleen say once that she was always expecting to look at the window and ‘see his face.’ I don’t know who she meant ... but after that I began to see faces in the dark.”

“Your mother was like that,” said the man absently. “She hated the dark. They shouldn’t make you sleep in it.”

“They should,” cried Timothy. “My aunts are bricks. I love them. And I wish they weren’t so worried.”

“Oh, so they’re worried?”

“Terribly. I don’t know what it is about. I can’t think it’s me ... though they look at me sometimes ... Do you see anything about me to worry them?”

“Not a thing. So your aunts are pretty good to you? Give you everything you want?”

“Almost everything,” said Timothy cautiously. “Only they won’t have raisins in the rice pudding on Fridays. I can’t imagine why. They always have it at Ingleside. The doctor is especially fond of it, so it must be

healthy. Aunt Edith would be willing but Aunt Kathleen says the Norrises have never put raisins in the rice pudding. Oh, are you going?" The man had stood up. He was very tall but he stooped a little. Timothy was sorry he was going although there was something about him he didn't like, just as there was something he did. And it was nice to have a man to talk to.

"I'm going down to the lake," said the man. "Would you like to come with me?"

Timothy stared.

"Do you want me to?"

"Very much. We'll ride on the ponies and eat hot dogs and drink pop ... and anything you like."

It was an irresistible temptation.

"But ... but," stammered Timothy, "Aunt Kathleen said I wasn't to go off the grounds."

"Not alone," said the man. "She meant not alone. I'm sure she'd think it quite ... lawful ... to go with me."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Quite," said the man ... and laughed again.

"About the money," faltered Timothy. "You see I've only ten cents. Of course I've got a quarter from my allowance but I can't spend it. I must get Aunt Edith a birthday present with it. But I can spend the ten cents ... I've had it a long time. I found it on the road."

"This is my treat," said the man.

"I must go and shut Merrylegs up," said Timothy, relieved, "and wash my face and hands. You won't mind waiting a few minutes?"

"Not at all."

Timothy flew up the driveway and disposed rather regret-fully of Merrylegs. Then he scrubbed himself, giving special attention to his ears. He hoped they were clean. Why couldn't ears have been made plain? When Jem Blythe asked Susan Baker the same question one day she told him it was the will of God.

"It would be more convenient if I knew your name," he hinted, as they walked along.

"You may call me Mr. Jenkins," said the man.

Timothy had a wonderful afternoon. A glorious afternoon. All the merry-go-rounds he wanted ... and something better than hot dogs.

"I want a decent meal," said Mr. Jenkins. "I didn't have any lunch. Here's a restaurant. Shall we go in and eat?"

"It's an expensive place," said Timothy. "Can you afford it?"

"I think so." Mr. Jenkins laughed mirthlessly.

It was expensive ... and exclusive. Mr. Jenkins told Timothy to order what he wanted and never think of expense. Timothy was in the seventh heaven of delight. It had been a glorious afternoon ... Mr. Jenkins had been a very jolly comrade. And now to have a meal with a real man ... to sit opposite him and order a meal from the bill of fare like a man himself. Timothy sighed with rapture.

"Tired, son?" asked Mr. Jenkins.

"Oh, no."

"You've had a good time?"

"Splendid. Only ..."

"Yes ... what?"

"I didn't feel as if you were having a good time," said Timothy slowly.

"Well," said Mr. Jenkins as slowly, "I wasn't, if it comes to that. I kept thinking of ... of a friend of mine and it rather spoiled things for me."

"Isn't he well?"

"Quite well. Too well. Too likely to live. And ... you see ... he isn't happy."

"Why not?" asked Timothy.

"Well, you see, he was a fool ... and worse. Oh, he was a very big fool. He took a lot of money that didn't belong to him."

"You mean he ... stole it?" queried Timothy, rather shocked.

"Well, let's say embezzled. That sounds better. But the bank thought it bad any way you pronounced it. He was sent to prison for ten years. They let him out a little sooner ... because he behaved rather well. And he found himself quite rich. An old uncle had died when he was in prison and left him a pot of money. But what good will it do him? He is branded."

"I'm sorry for your friend," said Timothy. "But nine years is a very long time. Haven't people forgotten?"

"Some people never forget. His wife's sisters for instance. They were very hard on him. How he hated them! He brooded all those years on getting square with them when he came out."

"How?"

“There is a way. He could take something from them that they want very much to keep. And he’s lonely ... he wants companionship ... he’s very lonely. I’ve been thinking about him all afternoon. But you mustn’t think I haven’t enjoyed myself. It’s been something to remember for a long time. Now, I suppose you want to get back before your aunts come home?”

“Yes. But just so they won’t get worried. I’m going to tell them about this, of course.”

“Won’t they scold you?”

“Likely they will. But scolding doesn’t break any bones, as Linda says,” remarked Timothy philosophically.

“I don’t think they will scold you much ... not if you get the head start of them with a message I’m sending them by you. You got that present for your aunt’s birthday, didn’t you?”

“Yes. But there is one thing. I’ve got that ten cents yet, you know. I’d like to buy some flowers with it and go over to the park and put them at the base of the soldier’s monument. Because my father was a brave soldier, you know.”

“Was he killed in South Africa?”

“Oh, no. He came back and married mother. He was in a bank, too. Then he died.”

“Yes, he died,” said Mr. Jenkins, when they had reached The Corner.

“And,” he added, “I fancy he’ll stay dead.”

Timothy was rather shocked. It seemed a queer way to speak of anyone ... what Aunt Kathleen would call flippant. Still, he couldn’t help liking Mr. Jenkins.

“Well, good-bye, son,” said Mr. Jenkins.

“Won’t I see you again?” asked Timothy wistfully. He felt that he would like to see Mr. Jenkins again.

“I’m afraid not. I’m going away ... far away. That friend of mine ... he’s going far away ... to some new land ... and I think I’ll go, too. He’s lonely, you know. I must look after him a bit.”

“Will you tell your friend I’m sorry he’s lonely ... and I hope he won’t be always lonely.”

“I’ll tell him. And will you give your aunts a message for me?”

“Can’t you give it to them yourself? You said you were coming back to see them.”

“I’m afraid I can’t manage it after all. Tell them not to worry over that letter you got this morning. They needn’t go to their lawyer again to see ... if the person who wrote it has the power to do what he threatened to do. I know him quite well and he has changed his mind. Tell them he is going away and will never bother them again. You can remember that, can’t you?”

“Oh, yes. And they won’t be worried any more?”

“Not by that person. Only there’s this ... tell them they must cut out those music lessons and put raisins in the Friday pudding and let you have a light to go to sleep by. If they don’t ... that person might bother them again.”

“I’ll tell them about the music lessons and the pudding, but,” said Timothy sturdily, “not about the light if it’s all the same to that person. You see, I mustn’t be a coward. My dad wasn’t a coward. If you see that person will you please tell him that?”

“Well, perhaps you’re right. Ask Dr. Blythe about it. I went to college with him and I fancy he knows what’s what. And this is for your own ear, son. We’ve had a fine time and it’s all right as it happens. But take my advice and never go off with a stranger again.”

Timothy squeezed Mr. Jenkins’ hard hand.

“But you aren’t a stranger,” he said wistfully.

The Second Evening

THE NEW HOUSE

*Milk-white against the hills of pine
Behind your aspens' shaking gold
You wait for me; I fondly hold
Your key and know that you are mine,
And all your lovely ghosts I see
Of days and years that are to be.*

*Grey twilights sweet with April rain,
The August madness of the moon,
October's dear autumnal croon,
December's storm against your pane,
Must all enchant and mellow you
O house, as yet too proudly new.*

*There must be laughter here and tears,
There must be victory and defeat,
Sweet hours and hours of bittersweet,
High raptures, loyalties and fears ...
All these must blend in you to give
A soul to you and make you live.*

*Music of children at your door,
And white brides glimmering down your stair,
Girls with May-blossoms in their hair,
And dancing feet upon your floor,*

*And lovers in the whispering night
For you, the house of friendly light.*

*There must be fireside councils here,
Partings and meetings, death and birth,
Vigils of sorrow as of mirth ...
All these will make you year by year
A home for all who live in you,
Dear house as yet too proudly new.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “Is that the new house Tom Lacey has built on the
Lowbridge road? I saw you looking at it very intently.”

SUSAN BAKER:- “They say it has cost him more than he will ever be
able to pay. But a new house *is* interesting and that I will tie to.
I have sometimes thought ...” *Breaks off, thinking it may be
wiser not to tell what an old maid thinks about new houses.*

ROBIN VESPERS

*When winds blow soft from far away
Among the orchard trees,
The robins whistle out the day
With mellow minstrelsies.
When dews are falling cool and still
In valleys dim and far,
The robins flute upon the hills
To greet the evening star.*

*Hark, hear them in the beechen glade
And in the sunset woods!
Hark, hear them in the haunted shade
Of fern-sweet solitudes,
Where little pixy people creep
To learn the silver notes
That in one twilight rapture leaps
From scores of answering throats.*

*One must be glad to hear them so,
They are so glad themselves;
Some darling secret they must know
Shared by the tree-top elves,
Some secret they would fain repeat
To us ere darkness falls,
When far and sweet and near and sweet
We list the robin calls.*

Anne Blythe

SUSAN BAKER:- “I do like to hear the robins whistling at evening.”

ANNE:- “Sometimes the maple grove and Rainbow Valley seem just alive with them.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Do you remember how they used to whistle over in the Haunted Wood and at Orchard Slope?”

ANNE, *softly*:- “I’ve forgotten nothing, Gilbert ... nothing.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Nor I.”

JEM BLYTHE, *shouting in at the window*:- “Spoons! Spoons! Say, Susan, was there any of that pie left? I’d appreciate it more than all the robin vespers in the world.”

SUSAN:- “Ain’t that like a boy? I wish Walter was more like that.”

NIGHT

*A pale, enchanted moon is sinking low
Behind the dunes that fringe the shadowy lea,
And there is haunted starlight on the flow
Of immemorial sea.*

*I am alone and need no more pretend
Laughter or smile to hide a hungry heart,
I walk with solitude as with a friend,
Enfolded and apart.*

*We tread an eerie road across the moor,
Where shadows weave upon their ghostly looms,
And winds sing an old lyric that might lure
Sad queens from ancient tombs.*

*I am a sister to the loveliness
Of cool, far hill and long-remembered shore,
Finding in it a sweet forgetfulness
Of all that hurt before.*

*The world of day, its bitterness and cark,
No longer have the power to make me weep ...
I welcome this communion of the dark
As toilers welcome sleep.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “More imagination, I suppose. When have you had a hungry heart?”

ANNE, *reproachfully*:- “All my childhood, Gilbert. And when I thought you were in love with Christine Stuart. And ... and ... when little Joyce died. You *can't* have forgotten, Gilbert.”

DR. BLYTHE, *repentantly*:- “No, but I always think of you beginning to live when I saw you first. The egotism of man, you will say truly. But people *do* forget because they have to. The world couldn’t go on if they didn’t. And there is something to hurt one every day, you know.”

SUSAN BAKER:- “That splinter I took out of Shirley’s dear little leg today hurt him and that you may tie to.”

MAN AND WOMAN

THE MAN

*Sweet, I must be for you the only one you have dreamed of,
None must have come before me to wear the rose of your heart;
Only for me your whispers, only for me your laughter,
Never the ghostly kiss of another to thrust us apart.
Only for me must that saint-pale cheek have crimsoned,
Only for me those eyes have woven their sapphire snare;
Lady of mist and flame, call me your only lover,
Tell me no other has lost his face in your raven hair.*

THE WOMAN

*Dear, it is naught to me who may have come before me,
Ivory and silken women fair to kiss and see,
Wooed in vanished twilights, longed-for on nights forgotten ...
This, this only I ask, none must come after me.
I must drain the last glass, not even the dregs for another,
Not for any other, queen or gypsy or nun!
Tell me none shall ever again hear your muted "I love you,"
Tell me no other shall ever win what I have won.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- "That is the kind of poetry I most decidedly don't care for. But I suppose we must chalk it all up to the score of imagination. Did you ever really write that stuff, Anne?"

ANNE:- "At Redmond. And of course it was pure fancy and was never published. See how yellow the paper is! And you were the first, you know."

SUSAN baker, *firmly*:- "You may have thought you wrote that poem, Mrs. Dr. dear, but you did *not*. It got mixed up with your papers somehow and you have forgotten. So I will make bold to say that, as far as I can understand it, it is not quite decent. And I am sure the doctor agrees with me."

DR. BLYTHE, *pretending to look grave*:- "Well, since I was the first ... and not Charlie Pye ..."

ANNE, *flinging the yellowed sheet on the fire*:- "There, that's the last of such nonsense."

DR. BLYTHE, *rescuing it*:- "By no means. I'm going to wait and see whether I *am* the last and how you will behave as my widow."

SUSAN, *going to the kitchen to begin her supper preparations*:- "If I did not know they were joking they would give me the creeps. But one just could not imagine either of them caring for

anybody else. Though they say Mr. Meredith is going to marry Rosamond West ... and he is a saint if ever a man was. It is a bewildering world and I am very glad I have not the running of it, let Mrs. Marshall Elliott say what she will about things being better run if women were at the helm.”

Retribution

Clarissa Wilcox was on her way to Lowbridge. She had heard that David Anderson was dying. Susan Baker of Ingleside had told her. Dr. Blythe of Glen St. Mary was David Anderson's doctor in spite of the fact that Dr. Parker lived in Lowbridge. But years ago David Anderson had quarrelled with Dr. Parker and would never have him again.

Clarissa Wilcox was determined that she would see David Anderson before he died. There were some things she must say to him. She had been waiting for forty years to say them ... and her chance had come at last. Thanks to Susan Baker whom she hated ... there had been an age-old feud between the Bakers of Glen St. Mary and the Wilcoxes of Mowbray Narrows and she and Susan Baker never did more than nod coldly when they met. Besides, Susan Baker put on such ridiculous airs because she was the hired girl at Ingleside. As if that was any great thing! None of the Wilcoxes ever had to hire out to earn their living. They had been wealthy once and had looked down on the Bakers. That time had long since passed. They were poor now but they still looked down on the Bakers. Nevertheless, she was grateful to Susan Baker for telling her about David Anderson.

He must be very close to death indeed or Susan Baker would not have mentioned it. They were a close-mouthed lot at Ingleside when it came to the doctor's patients. Susan was always being pumped but she was as bad as the rest of them ... as if she belonged to the family, thought Clarissa scornfully.

Such airs as some people gave themselves. But what else would you expect of a Baker?

The main thing was that she had found out in time that David Anderson was really dying.

She had known this chance must come. Amid all the injustices of life this one monstrous injustice could never be permitted ... that David Anderson, with whom she had danced in youth, should die without hearing what she had to tell him. Susan Baker had wondered at the strange flash that had come into Clarissa Wilcox's old, faded face when she had happened to mention his approaching death. Susan wondered uneasily if she should have mentioned it at all. Would the doctor be offended?

But everybody knew it. There was no secret about it. Susan decided she was being overscrupulous. None the less she was careful to mention it to Mrs. Dr. Blythe.

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Blythe had said carelessly. "The doctor says he may go out at any moment."

Which set Susan's conscience at rest.

Clarissa Wilcox knew that David Anderson could still hear her ... so much gossip said. In fact, Dr. Parker had said so. The sudden, unheralded stroke that had laid her hated enemy low ... everybody in Lowbridge and Mowbray Narrows and Glen St. Mary had forgotten for generations that there was any enmity or cause of enmity between them but to Clarissa Wilcox it was still a thing of yesterday ... well, the stroke had robbed him of speech and movement ... even of sight, since he could not lift his eyelids ... but he could still hear and was quite conscious.

Clarissa was glad he could not see her ... could not see the changes time had wrought in her once fair face ... yes, she *had* been good-looking once in spite of the Bakers' sneers ... something few Bakers had ever been ... certainly not poor Susan, who, however, belonged to a younger generation. Yes, she could say what she liked to David Anderson without any risk of seeing the old laughing scorn in his eyes.

He was helpless ... he was at her mercy ... she could tell him what had burned in her heart for years. He would have to listen to her. He could not escape from her ... could not walk away with his suave, courtly, inscrutable smile.

She would avenge Blanche at last ... beautiful, beloved Blanche, dead in her dark young loveliness. Did anybody remember Blanche but her? Susan

Baker's old aunt, perhaps. Had Susan ever heard the story? Not likely. The matter had been hushed up.

Clarissa, as usual, was shrouded in black, and was bent and smileless. She had worn black ever since Blanche died ... a Wilcox peculiarity, so the Bakers said. Her long, heart-shaped face, with its intense, unfaded blue eyes, was covered with minute wrinkles ... Susan Baker had thought that afternoon how strange that old Clarissa Wilcox had kept her eyes so young when those of all her contemporaries were sunken and faded. Susan thought herself quite young compared with Clarissa, who, she had been told, had been quite a beauty in her youth but had got sadly over it, poor thing. Well, the Wilcoxes had always had a great opinion of themselves.

"Mrs. Dr. dear," said Susan, as they concocted a fruitcake together, "is it better to be beautiful when you are young and have it to remember always, even though it must be hard to see your good looks fade, than to be always plain and so have nothing much to regret when you grow old?"

"What strange questions you ask sometimes, Susan," said Anne, deftly snipping candied peel into slender strips. "For my own part, *I* think it would be nice to be beautiful when you were young and remember it."

"But then you were always beautiful, Mrs. Dr. dear," said Susan with a sigh.

"Me beautiful ... with my red hair and freckles," laughed Anne. "You don't know how I longed to be beautiful, Susan. They tell me that that old Miss Wilcox who called this afternoon was quite a beauty in her youth."

"The Wilcoxes all thought they were handsome," said Susan with a sniff. "I never thought Clarissa was but I have told you that her sister Blanche was really quite handsome. However, though I am far from young, Mrs. Dr. dear, I do not remember her."

"You Bakers have never seemed to be very friendly with the Wilcoxes, Susan," said Anne, curiously. "Some old family feud, I suppose?"

"I have been told so," answered Susan, "but to tell the plain truth, Mrs. Dr. dear, I have never really known how it started. I only know that the Wilcoxes thought themselves much better than the Bakers ..."

"And I suppose the Bakers thought themselves much better than the Wilcoxes," teased the doctor, who had come in.

"The Wilcoxes had more money," retorted Susan, "but I do not think they were any better than the Bakers for all that. This Clarissa, now, was

said to have been quite a belle in her youth ... but she did not get a husband any more than some of the rest of us.”

“Perhaps she was more particular,” said the doctor. He knew that would enrage Susan, and it did. Without a word she picked up her pan of raisins and marched into the house.

“Why will you tease her so, Gilbert?” said Anne reproachfully.

“It’s such fun,” said the doctor. “Well, old David Anderson of Lowbridge is dying ... I doubt if he survives the night. They say he was a gay blade in his youth. You wouldn’t think so to see him now.”

“The things time does to us!” sighed Anne.

“You’re a bit young to be thinking of that yet,” said Gilbert. “Clarissa Wilcox looks rather young for her age. Those eyes, and hardly a thread of grey hair. Do you know who his wife was?”

“No ... Rose Somebody. Of course I’ve seen it on her monument in the Lowbridge cemetery. And it seems to me that there was some scandal about David Anderson and this Clarissa’s sister Blanche.”

“Who is talking scandal now?” asked Gilbert.

“A thing that is so old ceases to be scandal and becomes history. Well, I must go and placate Susan and get this cake in the oven. It’s for Kenneth Ford’s birthday ... they’ll be at the House of Dreams Wednesday, you know.”

“Have you got reconciled to exchanging the House of Dreams for Ingleside?”

“Long ago,” said Anne. But she sighed. After all, there would never be any place for her quite like the House of Dreams.

Meanwhile Clarissa Wilcox walked along the road to Lowbridge with the step of a young girl. Her dark hair, as the doctor had said, had few grey hairs in it, but looked rather unnatural around her wrinkled face. It was covered by a crocheted fascinator, as it used to be called, which Blanche had made for her long ago. She seldom went anywhere so it had lasted well. She never cared ... now ... what she wore. She had a long, thin mouth and a dreadful smile when she smiled at all. Very few people, if they had thought about it, had ever seen Clarissa Wilcox smile.

But she was smiling now. David Anderson was sick ... sick unto death ... and her hour had come. The Wilcoxes had always hated the Bakers but Clarissa forgave them everything now, for the sake of what Susan had told

her. In Clarissa's eyes Susan Baker was a young upstart, who put on silly airs because she was employed at Ingleside ... "Quite a step up in the world for a Baker," thought Clarissa scornfully ... but she forgave her for being a Baker. If she had not told her she might not have known till it was too late that David Anderson was sick or dying.

The magic light of a long, blue evening was sifting in from the Four Winds Harbour but the wind was rising rapidly. It sighed in the tall old spruces along the road and it seemed to Clarissa that ghostly years were calling to her in its voice. It was not an ordinary wind ... it was a wind of death blowing for David Anderson. What if he died before she got to him? Susan Baker had said he might pass out any minute. She hurried faster along the road to Lowbridge.

In the distance two ships were sailing out of the Four Winds Harbour ... likely *his* ships, she thought, forgetting that David Anderson had retired from business years ago. To be sure, some nephews of his carried it on. Where were they going? Ceylon ... Singapore ... Mandalay? Once the names would have thrilled her ... once she had longed to see those alluring places.

But it was Rose who saw them with him ... Rose instead of Blanche as it should have been ... and Rose was dead, too. But the ships still went out, although David Anderson, who had been a shipbuilder and owner all his life, carrying on trade in ports all over the world, had long ceased to go in them.

He left that to his son. His son! Perhaps!

Clarissa did not even know that his son was a ship surgeon and seldom was ever seen in Lowbridge.

Lowbridge was before her ... and David. There on the Main Street was David Anderson's rich, splendid house, where Rose had reigned for years. It was still rich and splendid in Clarissa Wilcox's eyes, although the younger generation were beginning to call it old-fashioned and out-of-date. Little white cherry blossoms were fluttering down on the walks through the cool spring air.

The wide door was open and she went in unseen ... across the hall ... up the wide, velvet stairs where her footsteps made no sound. All about her were empty rooms. Dr. Blythe had just made his last call on David

Anderson and now he was standing at the gate talking to the white-garbed nurse whom both he and Dr. Parker wanted at the same time.

"I really think I ought to go to Dr. Parker's case," she was saying slowly. She would really much rather have taken on Dr. Blythe's. He was much more reasonable than Dr. Parker, who, for instance, would have disapproved of her leaving David Anderson for a moment, as long as the breath was in his body. As if it made any difference now!

"Go to Parker's, by all means," said Dr. Blythe. "I can get Lucy Marks, who is on a visit with her mother over at Mowbray Narrows. You will not be needed here much longer," he added significantly.

"Young fools," thought Clarissa. "She is trying to get up a flirtation with Dr. Blythe."

To old Clarissa Wilcox both of them seemed mere children. But she did not care what they did. The only thing that mattered to her was that she was alone with David Anderson ... her longed-for chance had come at last, after years of waiting. All about her were empty rooms ... the dead and the dying were soon forgotten, she reflected bitterly. Even the nurse had left the dying man alone. Blanche, she thought, should have reigned in those rooms. *She* would not have left her husband to die alone. It did not occur to Clarissa that Blanche might have died before him as Rose had done. The Wilcoxes had good constitutions, she reflected proudly.

As she had come up the stairs she had glanced through the portieres of dull gold velvet that hung in the library doorway. They were old and worn but to Clarissa they seemed as splendid as ever. She saw the portrait of Rose hanging over the fireplace ... where Blanche's should have hung.

Rose had been painted in her wedding gown of ivory satin. David Anderson had had it painted by a visiting artist and Clarissa well remembered the local sensation it had made in Lowbridge, which was just a small village then where even photographs were taken once in a lifetime. When it was painted and hung David Anderson had given a party to celebrate it. It was talked of for months.

Although Clarissa saw nobody it seemed to her that whispers seemed to haunt the house. It was full of shadows ... shadows that seemed to grasp at you. They must be shadows that had come to attend David Anderson into eternity. Rose and Blanche and Lloyd Norman ... and who knew who else. But she would not be daunted by them. She had things to say ... things to

say that would astonish them all except Blanche ... and perhaps ... who knew? ... Lloyd Norman. And the time was getting short. At any moment that gossiping nurse might return.

Ah, here was his room at last ... a long, feline room with a little fire at the end of it, like the red tongue of a cat. The room he had shared with Rose!

And there was nobody in it except the dying David Anderson. What a piece of good fortune! She had been afraid that the nurse might have called in the housekeeper to keep watch while she talked at the gate with Dr. Blythe. There was not even a light and the crowding trees outside made it dimmer still. Of course it did not matter to David, who could no longer see ... but still it gave Clarissa a feeling of horror she could not have explained. The ghosts would have it all their own way in the dimness. She knew people did not believe in ghosts nowadays. She had heard both Dr. Blythe and Dr. Parker telling ghost stories and laughing over them. When they reached her age they would be wiser. And what an assemblage of ghosts must be crowding about David Anderson's bed!

The perfume of the lilac hedge below came up through the window heavily. Clarissa had never liked the scent of lilac blossoms. They always made her think of some secret, too-sweet thing ... perhaps like the love between David Anderson and Blanche Wilcox. Or ... again, who knew ... between Rose Anderson and Lloyd Norman. Again, for the thousandth time, Clarissa wished she knew the whole truth about that matter.

There was a vase on the table full of some white flowers that glimmered spectrally through the dusk. *That* was amusing. David Anderson had never cared for flowers. She supposed the nurse thought it part of her duties. Or maybe somebody had sent them in. She remembered a rose Blanche had given him and which he had dropped carelessly on the garden walk. Had he cared more for Rose's flowers? She, Clarissa, had picked up that rose and had it somewhere yet ... only she could not remember where. In some old dusty, faded volume of poems, she thought.

On the wall above the flowers hung a miniature of Rose. It had been painted while they were away on one of their visits. Clarissa hated the portrait in the library but she hated the miniature still more. It was so intimate and possessive ... as if it slyly flaunted its complete ownership of David Anderson.

Clarissa hated everything about it. She hated the pale, shining golden curls on either side of the vivid rose-and-white face ... Blanche had had black hair ... the large, round blue eyes, the rosebud mouth ... rosebud mouths were in fashion then. Who ever saw one now? ... the sloping shoulders ... *they* had gone out, too. The nurse had shoulders square as a man's.

The frame was of gold with a golden bowknot atop. Rose, she knew, had given it to David on one of his birthdays ... after she had begun carrying on with Lloyd Norman, too. Well, Blanche would have been true to him, at least. The Wilcoxes were always true to their husbands, even when they hated them.

After all, Clarissa was glad the room was dim. She did not want to say what she had to say to David Anderson with Rose smiling down triumphantly at her.

After one glance of hatred Clarissa thought no more of it ... or of anything but David Anderson. He was lying in the old-fashioned, canopy-top bed which had been his father's and mother's and in which he and Rose had slept all their married life.

His face on the pillow was a face of yellow wax. His eyes ... his smoky grey eyes, which had been, so they said, an inheritance from his Irish mother ... were hidden under wrinkled lids. His long-fingered, exquisite, rather cruel hands were lying on the spread. She remembered once, long years ago, they had walked home from somewhere ... she could not remember from where, but she remembered the clasp of his hands. But that was before Rose ...

The deep dimple was still in his chin ... Blanche had used to put her finger teasingly into that dimple. No doubt a hundred other girls had, too. What was that old proverb about a sailor with a lass in every port? Why, she had heard Dr. Blythe quote it one day. How proverbs lived while people died! Clarissa wondered who had said it first.

But at least the dimple had not changed. His magnificent white hair swept back from his brow. He was an old man but he did not seem old even as he lay there, dying.

And, thought Clarissa with a shudder, he still gave you the feeling that he was doing you a favour in allowing you to look at him. All the Andersons had it, more or less, but it was most strongly marked in David.

Clarissa sat down on a chair. Her breath came as fast as if she had been running. Only a few seconds had elapsed since she had entered the room but she felt as if she had been there for a century.

And she was surprised ... unpleasantly surprised ... to find that she was still afraid of him. She had always been afraid of him ... she admitted it at last ... but she had never dreamed that she would be afraid of him, now that he was as good as dead.

And she had not expected that he would still be able to make her feel crude ... silly ... always in the wrong. As if the Andersons were so much above the Wilcoxes! But he could ... and did.

She found her thin, veined hands trembling. And she was furious. She had waited a lifetime for this hour ... and she would not be robbed of it. If the nurse or the housekeeper came she would slam the door in their faces.

She fought down her weakness. Her voice was quite steady when she finally spoke ... steady and clear and quite young. Youth seemed to have come back to her. She and David Anderson were both young and it was all nonsense that he was dying ... just gossip that somebody had started. But then Rose must be young, too, and that she would not have. No, they were all old and she must say things quickly, or someone would come in and she would lose her chance.

The old house seemed listening to the cold poison of her words. At times the gusts of wind died away, too, as if the whole world wanted to listen. Dr. Blythe and the nurse were still talking at the gate. Men were all alike. What would Mrs. Blythe say if she knew?

“Tonight I shall rest well for the first time in years, David Anderson. Rest as well as you who will be dead. Dead, David Anderson. You never thought you could die, did you? Perhaps you will not rest ... if it is true that the soul survives the body. But *I* shall rest ... for I shall have told you what I have always wanted to tell you ... what I have waited years to tell you.

“How I have hated you always ... always! You won’t believe that. You thought nobody could hate you. How I have looked forward to seeing you on your deathbed! My only fear in all these years has been that I might die before you. But I knew Heaven would not allow such an injustice. The world is full of injustice but there are some things that are not allowed. This was one of them. You cannot see me, David Anderson, but you can

hear ... at least, Dr. Blythe says you can and he is one of the few honest men I know.

“You ruined and killed my sister Blanche. You knew she died ... but you did not know that her child lived! Ah, if you could move I think you would start at that. Very few people ever knew it ... we Wilcoxes had our pride as well as the proud Andersons. And we could keep a secret.

“You thought her child died with its mother. You thought you were safe. But it did not. A cousin of ours took it. It was a boy, David Anderson. Perhaps your only son. Ah, that should make you flinch if you had any power of movement left. But you never mistrusted Rose, did you? In your eyes she was the perfect wife. And all the time ... well, never mind. Gossip will be gossip, you know. Your son was called John Lovel. When he was seventeen he came back to Lowbridge and you gave him a job in your shipping office ... a poor, underpaid job. Your son, David Anderson. Do you remember? I doubt it. I suppose you have forgotten him long ago.

“I think perhaps I was the only one who knew the secret. But some may have guessed it ... for he was the living image of you. When he had been with you two years he took some money from your safe. Your partner wanted to overlook his fault ... he said he was so young ... and our cousin had not troubled himself much about his bringing up. But you were relentless. Do you remember, David Anderson? Your son ... *your son* ... went to jail and when he came out five years later he was a criminal. Your son, David Anderson!

“I can prove all this ... and when you are dead I shall publish it!

“Everyone will know that you, the just, upright, censorious man ... it was all so long ago that people have forgotten your wild youth ... why, you are even an elder in the church, aren't you?

“But when you are dead and buried ... beside Rose, David Anderson ... everyone will know that you were the lover of a girl you ruined and the father of an illegitimate son who is a jailbird. I shall see that it is talked about at your funeral. I have proof as I have told you, David Anderson.

“How will the minister feel when he is preaching your funeral sermon? And how I will be laughing to myself. For I will be there, David Anderson. Oh, yes, I will be there. I have not gone anywhere for years but I will go to your funeral. I would not miss it for anything. Think how people will talk. Even the young ones who have forgotten you ... to whom you are only a

name. They will talk about it for many a day. The Andersons will try to hush it up but they will not be able to. Oh, no, people love gossip too much, even when it is fifty years old or more. Mrs. Blythe will not say it is history by that time. She will find she is in the wrong.

“I am talking far too much and taking up too much time. Dr. Blythe will have finished his absorbing conversation with your nurse before long and she will come in, pussycat that she is.

“But it is so long since I have had a chance to talk to you, David Anderson. And there is so much I want to say to you before you die.

“You will be buried in the Anderson plot ... beside Rose. The vacant space is left on the gravestone for your name. Did it ever occur to you, David Anderson, that there was another name she might better have liked to have there? No, I don’t think it did. There could be no higher honour than having the name of Anderson on your tombstone, could there? But it should be Blanche, and not Rose, David Anderson.

“And when people pass your grave they will point it out and say, ‘Old David Anderson is buried there. He was a hypocrite.’

“Oh, yes, they will. I will take care they shall not forget. Even the younger ones will not forget. For one person I shall tell is Susan Baker. *She* will not forget. The Bakers always hated the Andersons. The Andersons did not care ... perhaps they did not know. The Bakers were too humble to be of any importance to an Anderson. I suppose they hated the Wilcoxes, too. People always hate those who are above them.

“But times have changed, David Anderson. The Bakers have quite an opinion of themselves now. Susan is even proud of working at Ingleside. She would not do a tap of work for anyone else. But she has not forgotten the old feud. She will be glad to hear of your disgrace, David Anderson. And I shall enjoy telling her. She pretends not to like gossip ... she likes to imitate that stuck-up Mrs. Blythe in every way she can. *I* could tell Mrs. Blythe a few things about Dr. Blythe and his nurses ... yes, and about him and Mrs. Owen Ford if I wanted to. But it is nothing to me. My business is with *you*, David Anderson.

“Oh, how I shall laugh when I pass your grave! I go through the graveyard every Sunday ... for I still go to church, David Anderson. Going to church seems to be going out of fashion ... but I go every Sunday I can ... and I go by that little path through the graveyard. People think I am a

very devoted daughter ... if they think about it at all. But I go through it to laugh ... quietly, to myself ... knowing that if I opened my mouth, I could blacken that spotless reputation of which you were so proud. And now I shall laugh more than ever.

“You were a proud man always, David Anderson ... proud even for an Anderson. Do you remember the time you would not sit beside my cousin in school because he was a Wilcox? And you were prouder as you grew older. Proud of your wife ... of your big business ... of your beautiful ships ... proud of being Captain Anderson ... proud of your rich, fine house ... did it ever occur to you that Rose married you for your house? ... proud of your handsome son.

“Are you sure he was your son, David Anderson?”

“Ah, now we come to it. Other people were not quite so sure. Ask Susan Baker’s grandfather when you meet him on the other side.

“Your beautiful Rose had a lover. You didn’t know that ... you never even suspected it. *I* knew it ... perhaps I was the only one who knew it ... but a good many suspected it. Why, even Susan Baker spoke of it when you had your stroke. She said her grandfather saw your Rose and Lloyd Norman one night. And there were suspicions of you and Blanche, too, though you thought you were so careful.

“I’ve always meant to tell you before you died. I knew, somehow, I should live longer than you. Not just because I was so much younger ... but, well, I *knew*. You worshipped Rose, didn’t you? You put up a beautiful and costly stained glass window to her memory in your Lowbridge church. At night its light falls across her grave and touches Lloyd Norman’s. But he doesn’t come to her now ... her baby face does not flush at his footsteps as I have seen it flush, you blind David Anderson. Her cheek is cold ... the grave is a bitter lover, David Anderson. But you know now ... you know at last. And you know all I have said is true. We do not tell lies to the dying. At last you know your wife ... your beautiful Rose whom the winds of heaven must not visit too roughly ... was false to you. And you know that many people suspected it, while you were holding your head so high. Susan Baker says her grandfather said to his wife at the christening of Rose’s son, ‘It’s a wise child that knows its own father.’”

Her passionate words sank into the silence as into a deep well. She had wreaked her hatred at last.

Not a moment too soon. Dr. Blythe had finished his conversation with the nurse and had gone. The nurse was coming back to her patient. There was a stir as if the housekeeper were coming up the back stairs. But she had done what she had meant to do for years. Ah, revenge was sweet.

Suddenly she knew that she was alone in the room. With shaking hands she snatched up a match and lighted a candle on the table. She held it up ... its faint, flickering light wavered over the face on the pillow. David Anderson, once so tremendously alive, was dead.

He had died while she was talking to him. And, lying dead, he smiled.

Clarissa had always hated his smile, because one could never tell what it meant. Nor could she tell now. Was he mocking her because nothing mattered ... any longer?

He had been the only one of the Andersons with such a smile. The Wilcoxes had hated all the others but not for their smile. She remembered that a schoolteacher had said that little David Anderson must have been to hell to learn a smile like that. The Andersons had him dismissed for the speech. But Susan Baker's grandfather had said it was only because David Anderson liked to cheat people out of their just dues. They said he ruled his crews by that smile alone. And Clarissa recalled that the Andersons had always had difficulty manning a ship if David was going on the voyage. She wondered if Rose had found out the meaning of it.

"I am an old maid," Susan Baker had said, "and I will be honest and admit that I have never had a chance to be anything else. But rather than marry a man with a smile like my grandfather said David Anderson had I would live the lives of a hundred old maids."

Clarissa seemed to go limp like an old dress as the nurse hurried into the room.

"He is dead," she said. "We have been expecting it all day."

"He died when you were having your nice little flirtation with Dr. Blythe," said Clarissa venomously.

The nurse stared in amazement. She knew old Clarissa Wilcox was supposed to be "not quite all there," but the idea of flirting with Dr. Blythe!

Clarissa felt aged ... worn-out ... foolish. The nurse was laughing at her ... even in the presence of death. Quickly she went out of the room, leaving him smiling on the pillow, arrogant in death as in life. Noiselessly she

went down and out and along the darkening evening street. The embers of sunset smouldered in the west. There were curling crests of ice-white foam on the harbour as if it were gnashing its teeth at her.

She felt very cold.

“I wish I were dead,” said Clarissa Wilcox aloud, quite careless of who might hear her. “I loved him so ... oh, I always loved him so ... from the time we were children at school. I hope he didn’t hear me ... oh, God grant that he didn’t hear me! But I shall never know.”

The Third Evening

THERE IS A HOUSE I LOVE

*There is a house I love
Beside a calling sea,
And wheresoever I may rove
It must be home to me.*

*There every room's a friend
To all who come and go,
I know the garden at the end
And every tree I know.*

*The wild mint by the gate,
The pansies by the sill,
The pointed firs that always wait
Behind it on the hill.*

*That house is very wise
Remembering lovely things,
The moons of autumn skies,
The rains of brooding springs.*

*Laughter that was its guest
And vanished dancing feet,
Oh, never find you east or west
A house so wise and sweet.*

*A house still full of cheer
That is not bought or sold,
For houses that are loved so dear
Can nevermore grow old.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “That’s an easy one ... Green Gables.”

ANNE:- “Not altogether ... nor mostly. It is a composite of Green Gables and the House of Dreams and Ingleside. Taken all together they spell ‘the house I love’ to me.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Don’t you really think, Anne-girl, that you love places too much?”

ANNE, *sighing*:- “I’m afraid I do. But, as Susan says, you can’t help the way you’re born.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “How well I remember those pointed firs on the hill of the Haunted Wood! And you are right in ‘wise and sweet.’ Yet houses *do* grow old.”

ANNE, *softly*:- “Not in memory.”

SEA SONG

*Sing to me
Of the mystery and lure of the sea,
Of the treasures of pearl in its unsunned caves,
Its ports of dream and its missing ships,
Of the wet sweet lips
Of the mermaids in its waves
Who pine for the kiss
Of mortal lovers and miss
In lands of faery earth's simple bliss,
And of hoards beyond our ken ...
The lost red gold of her vanished merchantmen!*

*Sing to me
Of the terror and lure of the sea,
Of the beautiful creatures it clasped to death ...
Wondrous-eyed children, women fair,
With their perfumed hair,
And pale mouths seeking for breath,
Of strong hearts it has chilled,
Men with victorious pulses forever stilled
On its snarling and wolfish coasts,
Princes and kings of the earth, imperial ghosts!*

*Sing to me
Of the beauty and lure of the sea,
Its blossoms of foam and its sapphire ways,
Its beryl of reef and its sheen of lagoon,
Its pale fire of the moon
On the breast of its crystal-clear bays,
Its wide chambers of night
All silent, austere and alight*

*With stars that in purple of heaven burn white,
And its revel of wind evermore
Making glad with the breakers that dash on a sunrise shore!*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “I believe I did an ineffaceable wrong in marrying a woman who could write like that and spoiling her career ... now, never mind getting indignant, darling. But tell me this: wasn’t *Captain Jim’s Lifebook*^{*} the inspiration of that poem?”

ANNE:- “Yes ... and I will be indignant. To think I’d prefer any career to marrying you! I’ve a notion never to forgive you.”

SUSAN BAKER:- “I have not enough education to understand all your poem, Mrs. Dr. dear, but do you think some of it is quite proper to be read before the children? Mermaids yearning for kisses and so on?” (*Adds under her breath*) “And it is not a good example for Walter and that I will tie to.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “It’s time we all went to bed. I have a ticklish operation for tomorrow.”

^{*}See *Anne’s House of Dreams*.

The Twins Pretend

Jill and P.G. ... alias Pig or Porky, according to Jill's mood ... were somewhat bored. This was not a common occurrence with them, for the imaginations which had kept everybody wondering during all their ten years of life what those two young devils would be up to next seldom failed to make the world a most interesting and intriguing place.

But something was wrong this particular morning at Half Moon Cove ... which was situated about halfway between Mowbray Narrows and Glen St. Mary, and was only beginning to be called "the summer colony."

Perhaps certain unlawful snacks in which they had indulged the preceding night ... when Aunt Henrietta had had one of her bad spells and Mums had been too busy to keep an eye on them ... may have had something to do with it. Nan and Diana Blythe had been over from Glen St. Mary ... "And we *had* to give them a decent lunch, Mums." "I don't see why they needed lunch at all," said Mums severely. "They had had their suppers and they were here only half an hour or so while their father made a sick call in the Upper Glen."

"I expect that old Susan Baker doesn't give them half enough to eat," said Jill. "Anyhow, they are lovely girls, Mums, and I wish we lived nearer to them."

"I have heard that the Blythe family are very nice," admitted Mums. "I know their father and mother are. But if they brew up as much mischief in a week as you two do in half an hour I pity the household and I think it might be better if this Susan Baker you talk of did not give them half as much to eat as rumour says she does. Did they tell you she did not give them enough to eat?"

“No, oh, no, they are too loyal,” said Jill. “But I know by the look of her she would starve you if she could. I’ve seen her in church.”

“Leaving Susan Baker and the Blythe twins entirely out of the question,” said Mums, “who has been using Aunt Henrietta’s new stewpan in such a way that it is hopelessly battered and dented?”

“Oh, we wanted something for a Roman helmet,” said P.G. easily.

A little thing like that never worried P.G. Why, there were dozens of better stewpans in the store at Glen St. Mary.

At all events, there they were, digging their brown toes into the sand and scowling viciously at each other. As Jill said, you had to do something to break the monotony. Probably they would have quarrelled ... and the twins’ quarrels always made their tired, overworked little mother wonder why Fate had picked *her* for their upbringing ... had not Anthony Lennox happened along.

But Anthony Lennox did happen along and Jill fell in love with him at sight. As she told Nan Blythe later on, he looked as if he had some dark secret on his conscience. Jill, like Nan, was at the stage when she adored villains. There was no surer passport to her favour than to look as if you were the wreck of a misspent life.

“Or a remorseful pirate,” Nan had said.

“It would be better still for him to be an unremorseful one,” said Diana.

Jill felt that she would die for an unremorseful pirate. It was then they discovered that Susan Baker did not approve of pirates. Of course a woman who did not approve of pirates would starve you if she got the chance.

“Oh, no,” said Diana loyally, “Susan wouldn’t starve anyone. Mother is always scolding her for giving us snacks after we go to bed. She would only say we would have more sense when we grew up.”

“Isn’t that the most maddening thing?” demanded Nan.

Jill agreed that it was.

Anthony Lennox looked gloomy enough to justify almost anything you could pretend about him. Just why the millionaire publisher of a Canadian-wide string of magazines should look gloomy and discontented on such a morning the twins didn’t know, any more than they knew why he was a million-aire ... Susan Baker had told the Blythe twins that ... or why, being

a millionaire, he had selected this obscure, unknown Prince Edward Island retreat for his summer vacation.

Like the twins, Anthony was bored. But, unlike the twins, it was fast becoming a chronic state with him. Susan Baker had said you got that way when you didn't have to work hard enough for your money.

Anthony was tired of everything. He was tired of making money ... of publishing magazines ... of shaping public opinion ... of being chased by women. He was ungallant enough to put it that way.

The whole world had gone stale.

And now he was tired of Half Moon Cove already though he had been there only a few days. What a fool he had been to come back there! He might have known ... he had known ... just how it would be. He strode over the shingle with the sting of the blowing wind in his face. There was a blue sky above ... a blue sea before ... a great, dazzling, merciless blue world all around him.

No place for ghosts, one would think. And yet here he was, haunted. Confound it!

And worse than haunted ... bored. It all came back to that. Ghosts and boredom were the two things Anthony Lennox couldn't endure. He had spent fifteen years trying to escape both. Of course his doctor had told him that he must go to a quiet place for the summer if he wanted his nerves to behave by the fall. But surely not a dead place.

He would leave that afternoon.

Just as he decided on this he reached the spot where Jill was sitting on a rock, with the air of a queen on a throne, and

P.G. was lying flat on his stomach on the sand, too bored himself even to lift his head.

Anthony paused and looked at Jill ... at her droll, little, impudent face under her fringe of reddish-brown hair ... at her nose, which was not the usual smudge of ten but a nose that stood on its own merits ... at her long, new-moon mouth, now drooping at the corners.

And the soul of Anthony Lennox was at that moment knit to the soul of Jill, nevermore to be unknitted. But it was not the nose or the mouth or the impudence that won him. Diana Blythe whom he had met had all those ... lacking a little of the impudence perhaps.

It was the eyes ... the luminous, black-lashed eyes. They were like eyes he had once known ... except that they were stormy and mutinous and grey, whereas the eyes he remembered had been blue and dreamy and yet somehow suggestive of wild, secret, unfettered delights ... very like Mrs. Dr. Blythe's, only the latter's were greyish green and he almost envied the doctor and if Mrs. Blythe had not been married and the mother of five or six children ... stop, Anthony Lennox, you maundering, sentimental, old fool!

"Well," said Anthony.

"Well, yourself," retorted Jill, a bit sulkily.

"Now, what is the matter?" said Anthony. "Two kids like you ought to be merry as grigs on a morning like this. I'll bet the Blythe twins are. I saw you playing with them last night and you all seemed to be having a good time."

"Matter! Matter!" Jill's wrongs surged up and overwhelmed her. "The Blythe twins are both girls. That makes the difference. Girls have some sense. This is all Pig's fault!"

Pig grunted.

"Oh, yes, grunt. He won't do one thing this morning but grunt. He won't pretend ... he simply won't. Just wallows there and grunts. It was all very fine last night. He wanted to show off before the Blythe girls. Oh, I know him."

Another furious grunt from P.G. But he would not be provoked into speaking. Let Jill say what silly things she might. The Blythe girls indeed!

P.G. would have died before he would have admitted that after he went to bed he had thought a good deal about Nan's eyes and wished Half Moon Cove were not quite so far from Glen St. Mary.

"If you never pretend ..." Jill waxed dramatic, "how are you going to exist here?"

"How indeed!" agreed Anthony fervently.

"The Blythe girls asked us to visit them ... but we can't go there every day. It isn't ..." In one of her April changes Jill was almost tearful ... "it isn't as if I was unreasonable. I told him I'd pretend whatever he wanted. It was my turn to choose ... and there was one thing I did want ... Nan Blythe said she and Walter often pretended it in Rainbow Valley ... but I told him he could choose. I'd pretend anything ... tortured Indians ...

or entertaining the King ... or a prince's daughter imprisoned in a castle by the sea ... or Edith Cavell at her execution ... or the land where wishes come true ... the Blythe girls love that ... or anything. And he won't. He says he's tired of everything."

Jill came to an end of breath and italics and poked P.G.'s shin savagely with her left foot.

P.G. rolled over on his back and revealed a face uncannily like Jill's, except for a pair of fine hazel eyes and more freckles.

"The land where wishes come true is the silliest pretend of all," he said scornfully. "'Cause wishes never do come true. Jill's got wheels in her head."

P.G. turned over again and gave Jill her chance of revenge.

"You didn't say that to Nan Blythe last night," she hissed. "You said you thought it the best game of all. And you'd better not lie on your stomach. You didn't wash behind your ears this morning."

P.G. gave no sign of hearing but Jill knew the shot had gone home. P.G., for a boy, was fussy about cleanliness.

"What was it you wanted to pretend?" said Anthony.

"Oh, I wanted to pretend we were rich ... we're really poor as snakes, you know ... and that we bought Orchard Knob and brought it back to life. Diana says they often pretend that, too. Though they *could*, perhaps. Their father is a very successful doctor."

Anthony's brown eyes opened widely.

"Where and what is Orchard Knob? And why and when did it die?"

"Tell him everything," jeered P.G. "Don't keep anything back. He'll be so interested."

"Oh, we just gave it that name after a place in a book. It's about half a mile back from the Cove and halfway between here and the Glen. It belongs to someone who went away years ago and never came back. It was a lovely place once. Nan says Susan Baker says it was even prettier than Ingleside, though I don't believe *that*. Have you ever seen Ingleside?"

"Oh, yes, I've been there," said Anthony, skipping a stone over the water in a way that made P.G.'s soul green with envy. "But I don't know any place called Orchard Knob."

"I *told* you we just named it that ourselves. It would be lovely yet if anyone loved it a little. It's so out at elbows, as Nan says. The shingles are

all curled up and the veranda roof is sagging and the shutters are all broken. And one of the chimneys has blown down and burdocks are growing over everything ... and it's so lonely and heartbroken."

"You borrowed that speech from Nan Blythe," muttered P.G.

"I don't care ... very likely she borrowed it from her mother. They say Mrs. Blythe writes stories. And anyhow I do want to cry every time I see it. It's awful to see a house so lonely."

"As if houses had any feelings!" scoffed P.G.

"They have," said Anthony. "But why has it never been bought?"

"Nobody will buy it. Diana says the heirs want too much for it and Susan Baker says she wouldn't take it as a gift. It would take a fortune to fix it up. But I would buy it if I was rich. And so would Pig, if he wasn't too sulky to say so."

"And what would you do with it?"

"Oh, I know. Pig and I have pretended so often that we know exactly. It isn't a bit like the Blythes would do it, but they are more economical in their imaginations. But *I* say when it is only imagination anyhow what difference does it make how extravagant you are."

"Agreed. But you haven't answered my question."

"Well, we'd shingle it ... Nan Blythe would stucco it ... and build up the chimney ... we were all agreed on that ... you ought to see the fireplace they have at Ingleside ... and tear down the old veranda and put in a nice sun porch."

"You seem to forget that he has been at Ingleside," sneered P.G.

"And we'd make a rose garden in the burdock patch. Susan agrees with us there. You'd be surprised how much imagination Susan Baker has got when you come to know her well."

"Nothing about a woman would surprise me," said Anthony.

"Is that a cynical speech?" asked Jill, staring at him. "Nan said her father said you were cynical."

"What would you do with the inside?" said Anthony. "I suppose it has gone to seed, too."

"Oh, we'd furnish it like a palace. I can tell you it's fun."

"Yes," sneered P.G., unable to keep silence any longer. "That's why Jill likes to pretend about it. She loves to fuss with curtains and cushions and

stuff. So do the Blythe girls. Though they have some sense. They'd do what I'd like to do."

"And what is that?"

"Being a man you ought to know. I'd put in a swimming pool ... and a tennis court ... and a rock garden ... you ought to see the one they have at Ingleside ..."

"I thought you said he'd been at Ingleside," said Jill. "They dragged the stones up from the harbour shore themselves and Susan Baker helped them."

"It wouldn't cost much for a rock garden," said P.G. "Look at all the stones round here. But besides I'd have a boathouse on the river ... there's a little river runs past Orchard Knob ... and kennels for hundreds of dogs. Oh!" P.G. groaned. "The things one could do if one were rich!"

"But we aren't. And you know, Porky ..." Jill was softening ... "imagination doesn't cost anything."

"You bet it does ... sometimes," said Anthony. "More than the richest man alive could afford to pay. But that idea of the rose garden gets me. I've always had a secret, starved ambition to grow roses."

"Well, why don't you?" said Jill. "Everyone says you are rich enough. The Blythe girls say their father says ..."

"It isn't exactly a question of riches, Jill dear. But of time to enjoy it. What would be the use of a rose garden you only saw once in so many years? I might have to be in Turkestan when the roses were in bloom."

"But you'd know the roses were there," said Jill, "and somebody else might be enjoying them if you weren't."

"What a philosopher! Well ..." Anthony decided the thing in a flash just as he always decided things ... "suppose we do fix this Orchard Knob of yours up?"

Jill stared. P.G. concluded that the man was crazy. Nan Blythe had said Susan had said people said he was.

"Fix it up! Do you mean really? And how can we? Can you buy it?"

"I don't need to. It's mine already ... though I've never laid eyes on it for fifteen years. And it was just the 'old Lennox place' then. At first I didn't know you were talking about it."

P.G. looked him over and concluded Nan was right. Jill did the same and concluded he was sane.

“And what do you mean,” she said severely, “by going away and leaving that beautiful place to die? No wonder Susan Baker thinks ...”

“Never mind what Susan Baker thinks. I’ll tell you the whole story sometime. Meanwhile, are you coming into partnership with me or are you not? I will furnish the cash and you will furnish the imagination. But the Blythe girls are not to know anything about it until it is finished.”

“They’re awfully nice girls,” protested Jill dubiously.

“Of course they are nice ... the daughters of Gilbert Blythe and Anne Shirley couldn’t help being nice. I knew them both at college.”

“They’d never tell if they promised not to,” said P.G.

“They wouldn’t mean to. But don’t you think Susan Baker would pick it out of them in a wink?”

“Have you got plenty of money?” demanded Jill, coming down to practicalities. “If we make it like we pretended it will cost ... millions, I guess.”

“No,” said P.G. unexpectedly. “I’ve figured it all out lots of times. Thirty thousand will do it.”

Anthony stared at him with a look which Jill took for dismay.

“You haven’t got so much? I knew nobody could have. Susan Baker says ...”

“If you mention Susan Baker’s name to me again I will pick out one of these nice round stones and go down to Ingleside and lay her out flat. And then do you think the Blythe girls will like you?”

“But you looked ...”

“Oh, I suppose I looked a bit staggered ... but it was not by the amount. Don’t worry, darling. There are quite a few shekels in my old stocking. Well, are you coming in with me?”

“You bet,” said Jill and P.G. together.

Bored? They didn’t know the meaning of such an expression. Wasn’t this just the last word in worlds! To think of a thing like this falling down on you, right out of the blue, so to speak!

It would have been incredible to anyone else but nothing was ever incredible to the twins. They had sojourned so often in the land where wishes come true that nothing amazed them much or long. They were sorry they couldn’t tell the Blythe twins about it but they knew quite well

that Susan Baker would find out all about it before long and they would have the triumph of knowing it before she did.

"I suppose your parents won't object?" said Anthony. "I'll want you up at this Orchard Knob a lot of the time, you know."

"We've no parents," assured Jill. "Oh, there is Mums, of course, but she is so busy waiting on Aunt Henrietta that she doesn't bother much about us. She won't worry. Besides, you're respectable, aren't you?"

"Entirely so. But your father ... is he ..."

"Dead," said P.G. cheerfully. A father who had died three months after he and Jill had come into the world was only a name to him.

"He didn't leave a cent, so Susan ... so people say, so Mums had to go to work. She teaches school when we are home. We live out west, you know."

"And she wasn't very well last year," said Jill, "so the board gave her a year's leave of absence ..."

"With salary," interposed the financially minded P.G.

"And she came to Half Moon Cove for a rest."

"She rests waiting on Aunt Henrietta," said P.G. scornfully. "It's a change of tribbleation, I suppose."

"I don't think we'd better tell her about this anyhow," said Jill, "because then she might think she ought to worry about us and she's got enough without that, so Susan ... I mean people say. She'll just think we're prowling around the shore as usual as long as we're home for meals and bed. We are used to looking after ourselves, Mr. ... Mr. ..."

"Lennox ... Anthony Lennox, at your service."

"What will you do with Orchard Knob when you do fix it up? Live in it?"

"God forbid!" said Anthony Lennox.

There was that in his tone that forbade further questioning. Live at Orchard Knob! And yet, once upon a time ...

They went up to Orchard Knob that night. The twins were wild with excitement but Anthony felt like turning tail and running, as he unlocked the rusty iron gate with the key he had got from Lawyer Milton of Lowbridge.

"The very first thing to do," said Jill, "is to tear down this dreadful wall and gate. It's all holes anyway. Porky and I used to crawl through one behind the barns. We couldn't get into the house, though. We couldn't even

see into it. Susan ... a lady we must not mention to you for fear you flatten her out with a stone ... said it used to be a fine place long ago."

"Well, you'll see it now. We'll go all over it and then we'll sit down on the veranda and plan what we are going to do with it."

"Oh, I've got all that planned out long ago," said Jill airily. "Nan Blythe and I finished furnishing the sunroom last night. I suppose I can mention *her* name to you without her getting flattened out?"

"Well, yes. But she is not to know anything about this."

"We promised," said Jill, with dignified rebuke. "But if we are much at Orchard Knob the secret will soon get out."

"But not the fact that I am following your ideas," said Anthony.

Then he shrugged his shoulders resignedly. She should have her way. It would be fun of a sort to give her her head and see what she would make of the place. What earthly difference would it make to him? After Orchard Knob was renovated it would be easy to find a purchaser for it. Long ago it would have been almost impossible but summer tourists were coming to the Island now.

In any case it meant nothing to him, nothing.

Nevertheless, his hand trembled oddly as he unlocked the door. He knew what he should see inside.

Yes, there it was ... the big fireplace in the square hall and in it the ashes of its last fire beside which he had sat one unforgettable night, unforgettable night, fifteen years ago, and looked despair in the face before turning his back on the old place forever. Why hadn't the ashes been swept up? Milton was supposed to find a woman to keep the place in order.

Evidently he hadn't troubled about it. Dust was thick on everything.

Jill sniffed.

"For goodness sake leave the door open," she commanded. "This house smells like a tomb. No wonder, poor thing. No sunshine for fifteen years. But we'll change all that. If Susan Baker saw this place ..."

"Have you forgotten what I said?" demanded Anthony.

"Yes. You didn't mean it, you know. I'm going to speak about Susan and the Blythe twins whenever they come into my head. But I won't talk about your fixing up Orchard Knob with them ... I give you my word of honour for that."

The next hour was one of wonder for the twins. They explored the house from attic to cellar and Jill went quite mad over its possibilities. Even P.G. waxed enthusiastic.

But one thing, Jill avowed, gave her the creeps ... the dead clock on the stair landing ... a tall grandfather clock pointing to twelve ... very like the one she had seen at Ingleside.

"I stopped them there one night fifteen years ago," said Anthony, "long before the Blythes came to the Glen at all. I was on a sentimental orgy that other night, you know. I thought time was ended for me."

"When we get this place living again I'll start that clock going," said Jill resolutely. "The one at Ingleside goes all the time. It belonged to Dr. Blythe's great-grandfather. You ought to see the airs Susan puts on about it. And even Mrs. Blythe ..."

"Not a word of or about or against or for Mrs. Blythe," said Anthony firmly.

"Don't you like her?" asked Jill curiously. "We do."

"Of course I like her. If I had met her before the doctor did ... or before I made an ass of myself ... I'd have married her if she would have had me. But of course she wouldn't. Now we will drop that subject."

They went out and sat down on the veranda steps. Anthony looked around him. What a beautiful, melancholy old place it was! And once it had been so gay.

How weedy had grown the garden his mother had loved! That far corner where nothing had been allowed to grow but violets was a jungle of burdocks. He felt the reproach of the house. It had once been full. Men and women had loved each other in it. There had been births and deaths ... agony and joy ... prayer ... peace ... shelter.

And yet it was not satisfied. It craved more life. It was a shame to have neglected it so long. He had loved it well once. And what a view there was from this front door, over a sea that was silver and sapphire and crimson. The view from Ingleside, over Four Winds Harbour, was justly renowned, but it could not compare with this, let good old Susan brag as she might.

"And now before we go home," said Jill, "you might as well tell us why you left Orchard Knob all alone. You promised, you know."

"I said I'd tell you sometime," objected Anthony.

“This is sometime,” said Jill inexorably. “And you might as well begin at once because we must be home before it gets too dark or Mums might get worried.”

In the end he told them. He had never told anybody before. For fifteen years he had held his tongue and brooded. Now he found a queer relief in telling these round-eyed youngsters all about it. They wouldn’t understand, of course, but just to tell it sluiced some old bitterness out of his soul. He had had a queer craving to tell Mrs. Blythe the night he walked down to the Four Winds Harbour with her but concluded she would think him only a fool.

“There was a young fool once ...”

“You?” demanded P.G.

“Hush! Have you no manners?” said Jill in a fierce whisper.

“Never mind manners. They don’t come into this. Yes, I was the young fool. And I am not any wiser now. There was a girl ...”

“Always a girl,” muttered P.G. in disgust.

“Pig, hush!” ordered Jill terribly.

As he told them the story his eyes and his voice grew dreamy. He ceased, Jill reflected, to look like a pirate and began to look like a haunted poet.

He and this girl had been pals in childhood ... and then, as they grew older, lovers. When he had gone abroad for his education he had given her a little ring which she had promised to wear “as long as she cared for no one else.”

On his return from England three years later she was not wearing the ring. That meant she didn’t care for him any longer. He was too proud and hurt to ask why.

“Just like a man,” said Jill. “Why, there might have been some perfectly good reason. It might have got too loose and slipped off her hand when she was washing. Or it might have broken and she hadn’t had time to have it fixed.”

“Well, I had this place shut up ... it was mine then as my parents had died ... and left it to dust and decay.”

“I don’t think you managed a bit well,” said Jill cruelly. “You should have asked her right out why she didn’t wear the ring.”

"I would have, you bet," said P.G. "No girl would ever put anything like that over on me. And, as Jill says, there might have been some perfectly simple explanation."

"There was. She was in love with another man. I soon found that out."

"How?"

"People told me."

"*She* didn't tell you. Maybe she was as proud as you were. Nan Blythe says Susan Baker told her lots of stories like that. Susan Baker delights in telling love stories even if she is an old maid. I don't think I'll be an old maid, even though I think there are some advantages."

"*Do* stick to the subject, Jill," said P.G. irritably. "It's so like a girl to roam over everything. Susan Baker doesn't know a thing about this."

"How do you know she doesn't? She knows a lot about everything, Diana says."

"Well, even if the story was true there was no sense in leaving Orchard Knob to die, was there?" asked P.G.

"Men are such selfish pigs," said Jill. "Susan Baker says Dr. Blythe is the most unselfish man she knows but even he, if anyone eats the slice of pie she leaves for him in the pantry when she goes to bed, raises Cain."

"Men in love are never sensible ... and rarely unselfish, Jill. And, you see, I was terribly hurt."

"Yes, I know." Jill slipped her little brown paw into his and gave it a sympathetic squeeze. "It's rotten to have anyone let you down like that. What was she like?"

Ah, what had she been like! Pale, shy, sweet. She laughed rarely but her laughter was exquisite. She was like ... why, like a silver birch in moonlight. All the men were crazy over her. He had thought the other night that Mrs. Dr. Blythe of Glen St. Mary reminded him of her somewhat. Though they didn't look a bit alike. It must have been some soul resemblance.

No wonder she wouldn't have him ... a poor devil whose only patrimony was a small country estate.

And her eyes ... blue as the sea and bright as the stars ... why, a man might die for such eyes.

"Like Helen of Troy's," murmured Jill.

"Helen of ... how much?"

“Of Troy. Surely you know who Helen of Troy was!”

“Of course. My ancient history has grown a little rusty, that’s all. She was the lady men fought for ten years about. I wonder if the winner thought she was worth fighting about so long?”

“Susan Baker says no woman ever is or was,” said P.G., “but then nobody ever fought about *her*.”

“Never mind Susan Baker. Whom do you pretend is Helen of Troy?”

“The artist who is boarding next door to Aunt Henrietta’s for the summer. We don’t know her name but she smiled so beautifully at us when we meet her. She has such sweet blue eyes ... oh, she is transcendently lovely.”

“She’s a good-looking gal, not so young as she used to be,” said P.G., who liked to pretend he was hard-boiled and who had heard Dr. Blythe say the same of someone.

“Oh, do shut up,” said Jill furiously again. “Did she ... I mean your girl ... marry the other fellow?”

“I suppose so.”

“You *suppose* so! Don’t you *know*?”

“Well, her family moved out west next year. I don’t know what became of her.”

“And you never took the trouble to find out. Well, I guess Susan Baker has more sense than most women,” said the disgusted Jill.

“Well, you see I was too sore ever to try to find out. Now, shall we call this a day? Helen of Troy will probably be anxious about you even if your mother isn’t.”

“Helen doesn’t know us, and mother is very anxious about us as a rule,” said P.G. indignantly. “Only Aunt Henrietta is very exacting. She was our father’s sister, not Mum’s. And Susan Baker says she is the worst crank on the Island. Even the doctor says ...”

“P.G.,” said Jill solemnly. “You are not to repeat gossip ... not even if Diana Blythe tells you.”

“Who is it he’s stuck on?” whispered Anthony to Jill. “Nan or Diana?”

“Both,” said Jill. “But now what about this house?”

“I’ll run up to town tomorrow and by next week we can get started,” said Anthony.

A few days later an army of workmen descended on Orchard Knob and Jill entered the seventh heaven. Never in all her life had she had such fun. She bossed the men to death, but as she had the technique of managing the sex at her fingers' ends, they never knew it and did exactly as she ordered. She let Anthony and P.G. run the outdoors alterations for the most part, but as far as the house was concerned she was supreme.

The old place had been asleep for many years but now it was wakened up with a vengeance. The chimney was built up, the roof shingled with lovely green and brown shingles, the house wired from top to bottom and fitted up with all kinds of mechanical gadgets.

Jill, for all her romantic tendencies, was surprisingly practical when it came to equipment. She insisted on a china closet being put in between the kitchen and the dining room and the lovely green and mauve and old-rose bathrooms ... she had a colour scheme for every floor ... ran up a bill that would have staggered Jill if she had ever seen it.

When it came to refurnishing her cup ran over. She was brimming with ideas. Anthony had to get a Chinese embroidery Jill liked for the hall walls and a dear little blue china cabinet with bouquets painted on its doors, and wonderful brocade curtains for the living room that were between spring-green and pale gold ... oh, Jill certainly had a taste! Mirrors in all the closet doors ... Persian rugs like velvet ... brass andirons and silver candlesticks and a lace-like, wrought copper lantern to hang in the new porch.

Jill often reflected that it was well that the Blythe girls were away up at some place called Avonlea, visiting an aunt. Otherwise she did not see how she could have refrained from telling them the whole matter and showing them what was being done. The whole countryside was said to be wild with curiosity. This must be being done for a bride, of course.

"Anyhow, you have your window," said P.G. comfortingly to Anthony.

P.G. secretly wished the Blythe girls were home and could come over and see him bossing the workmen at the swimming pool and strutting around the tennis court.

As for the window, Jill and Anthony had had several pitched battles over that window.

He wanted one cut in the hall at the side of the living room door, so that a wonderful view of the sea, with Four Winds Harbour in the distance,

could be seen, but Jill was sure it would spoil the wall.

Anthony proved surprisingly stubborn, said he didn't care if the wall was spoiled, and in the end they compromised. He was to have his window and Jill was to have the bedroom that had already been painted a robin's egg blue redecorated with a startling wallpaper spattered with parrots.

Anthony thought it would be rather awful but as usual the result vindicated Jill's taste.

Finally the end came. The workmen had gone. All the disorder had been eliminated. Orchard Knob lay in the late August sunshine, a beautiful, gracious place, inside and out.

Jill sighed.

"It's been a heavenly summer," she said.

"I've enjoyed it myself," admitted Anthony. "I hear your friends, the Blythe girls, are home again. Perhaps you would like to have them see it."

"Oh, they were over here this afternoon," said Jill, "and we showed them everything. They thought it wonderful ... I *will* admit they are not a bit jealous ... but they *must* have thought Ingleside pretty small potatoes after this."

"Ingleside is a pretty nice place just the same," said P.G., who had been down there and found he liked Susan Baker's pies.

"But ..." Jill looked at Anthony reproachfully, "this house wants to be *lived* in now. *That* is the advantage Ingleside has."

Anthony shrugged.

"Well, someone will be living in it ... in the summers at least. I've had a good offer already, from a New York millionaire. I think I'll close with it."

"Well ..." Jill sighed and yielded to the inexorable logic of facts. Of course if Anthony had no intention of spending any more summers at Half Moon Cove somebody else might as well have Orchard Knob. "That is better than shutting it up again and leaving it. Anyhow, we must have a housewarming.

I have it all planned out."

"You would have. Are you going to ask Susan Baker?"

"Don't be sarcastic, Anthony. But we *must* have Dr. and Mrs. Blythe ... but not a mob, you understand."

"Certainly the Blythes. I *would* like Mrs. Blythe to see this place before it belongs to anyone else."

“We’re going to light a big fire in the fireplace ... Nan Blythe says she knows where we can get all the driftwood we need. And we’ll turn on all the lights in the house. Won’t it look gorgeous from outside? Isn’t it lucky the house is so near the river? And we’ll bring a lunch and have a jamboree. Mother said she would provide the eats. We told her all about everything last night. But she knew most of it before.”

“It’s a way mothers have.”

“Will tomorrow night suit you?”

“Haven’t you settled the night also?” sneered Anthony. “Might as well, seeing you’ve planned everything else.”

“But we must have a night that would suit you,” said Jill. “It would never do for you not to be at your own housewarming. And we have to consider the Blythes too.”

“And make sure nobody has a baby too near the Glen that night,” sneered P.G.

“You need not be indelicate,” said Jill.

“Is a baby indelicate?” asked P.G. “Then be sure you never have one.”

“I’m going to have a half dozen,” said Jill coolly. “If that girl had still been wearing your ring, Mr. Lennox, how many babies do you think you would have had?”

“For heaven’s sake let us cut out this type of conversation,” begged Anthony. “I am old-fashioned, I know, but it embarrasses me. Have your housewarming and plan it as you like. And don’t blame me if Dr. Blythe has a baby that night.”

They had planned something Anthony had not expected. He knew they would bring their mother, of course ... Aunt Henrietta being willing ... but he did not expect Mrs. Elmsley, the artist, whom, as it chanced, he had never happened to meet.

P.G. stared when Jill told him she had asked Mrs. Elmsley.

“But why? She’s a stranger to him ...”

“Don’t be so stupid, Pig. She’s dying of curiosity to see the place and she has to go back to Winnipeg very soon ... too soon for Anthony to fall in love with her.”

“Do you want him to fall in love with her?” P.G. felt all at sea.

“I do ... she is so beautiful he can’t help it.”

“But she’s a Mrs.”

“She is a widow, Pig. I should think you would take that for granted when I want Anthony to fall in love with her. And don’t you see? He wouldn’t sell Orchard Knob then and they’d live here in the summers anyhow. And they’ll have three children ... two boys and a girl. And the girl would have the blue parrot room. Oh, how I hate to think of anyone, even Anthony’s daughter, having that parrot room.”

“But we’ll be out west. And I don’t suppose we’ll ever come east again. So you won’t be harrowed seeing her in it,” said

P.G. with more sympathy than he usually displayed. “But I’ll always be seeing her in it in my imagination. And I just wish the parrots would peck her eyes out.”

The next night for the first time in fifteen years Orchard Knob blazed with light and a fire of driftwood glowed in the hall fireplace. The walls blossomed with red candles like rose-blooms.

Half the people in Glen St. Mary and Mowbray Narrows and Lowbridge drove or walked past the old Lennox place that night. Susan Baker was not among them but she heard all about it from the doctor and Anne the next morning.

“I wonder what the widow thinks,” she said. “Winnipeg may be a very fine place ... I have a nephew there ... but to think it could beat the Island!”

Jill was dancing on the rug before the fire.

“I’m pretending this is a magic rug,” she cried. “Everyone who steps on it will forget every disagreeable thing in his life. Try it, Anthony.”

Anthony got up from the chair where he had been sprawled by the fire and sauntered across to the window to look out on a night that was drowned in moonlight and see if any of the guests were coming. The Blythes had phoned that they would be there but a little on the late side. Luckily no babies were expected but Jim Flagg had broken his leg.

The twins did not tell Anthony that they had asked Mrs. Elmsley but he had a pretty good idea that they had. Since they had got acquainted with her they had raved so much about her beauty that he was conscious of a rather ashamed desire to see her. He did not know her name but Jill seemed to think her the most exquisite creature in the world.

“I’m getting jumpy. It’s time Mrs. Elmsley was here,” whispered Jill anxiously to P.G. “I hope she hasn’t forgotten. I’ve heard that artists aren’t very dependable.”

“What is the matter with Anthony?” whispered P.G.

Anthony, looking out of the new, magic window, was also wondering what was the matter with him.

Had he gone quite mad? Or was the window really the magic one of Jill’s pretence?

For she was there, crossing the moonlit lawn with that light step that always made him think of Beatrice, “born under a dancing star.” The next moment she was standing in the doorway. Behind her were dark trees and a purple night sky.

Her sweet face ... her eyes ... her dark wings of hair ... unchanged ... unchangeable.

“Betty!” cried Anthony.

“Mums!” cried the twins. “Where is Mrs. Elmsley? Isn’t she coming?”

“God grant she isn’t,” muttered the doctor, who was just behind Betty. He had got through with Jim’s leg sooner than he expected and something in Anthony’s face told him the whole tale. “At least not for a while. Anne, come out with me to the garden. No, not a word of objection. For once I am going to be obeyed.”

Anthony was at the door. He had her hands in his.

“Betty ... it’s you! Do you mean to say you’re ... they’re ... you’re their mother? Of course they told me their name ... but it’s such a common one ...”

Mums began to laugh because as Jill ... who had lived a century in a moment ... perfectly understood, she had either to laugh or cry. P.G., less quick at taking the heart out of a mystery, still continued to stand still, staring, with his mouth hanging open.

“Anthony! I didn’t know ... I never dreamed. The children didn’t tell me your name ... and I had never heard of an Orchard Knob. I’ve had to stick so close to Aunt Henrietta this summer I never went anywhere or heard any gossip. And they pretended you were ... they called you ... oh, I thought it was just some of their nonsense ... oh ...”

Everybody seemed to be so balled up that Jill had to come to the rescue. She had never seen anything so amazing as Anthony’s face. Neither had Anne Blythe, who had deliberately disobeyed her husband and gone back to the front door.

“Mums, isn’t Mrs. Elmsley coming? We thought ...”

“No, she has one of her bad headaches. She asked me to tell you so with her apologies.”

“Jill,” said Anthony suddenly, “you have been ordering me around all summer. I’m going to have my turn at it now. Go out ... go anywhere, you and P.G. ... for half an hour. Mrs. Blythe, will you excuse me if I ...”

“Ask the same thing? I will. I’ll go and apologize to my husband.”

“And as a reward you may tell Susan Baker everything tomorrow,” said Anthony.

When they came back to say the supper was ready in the dining room they found Anthony and Mums on the settee by the fireplace. Mums had been crying but she looked extraordinarily happy and prettier than they had ever seen her ... all the sadness gone.

“Jill,” said Anthony, “there is another chapter to that story I told you here one night.”

“No decent person eavesdrops,” said Dr. Blythe to his wife, who had been drawn back to the sunroom steps.

“I am not a decent person, then,” said Anne, “and neither are you.”

“It was all a dreadful mistake,” went on Anthony.

“I knew it,” said Jill triumphantly.

“She was still wearing my ring ... on a chain round her neck ... but she’d heard things about me ... had she a title, Betty?”

“Not quite as bad as that,” smiled Mums.

“Well, she thought I had forgotten our old compact, so she took the ring off her finger ... and we were just two proud, hurt, silly young things ...”

“I seemed to have only one object in life,” murmured Mums ... “to keep people from thinking I cared.”

“You succeeded,” said Anthony a bit grimly.

“How history repeats itself,” thought Dr. Blythe to himself. “When I thought Anne was engaged to Roy Gardiner ...”

“Isn’t that life?” thought Anne. “When I thought Gilbert was engaged to Christine Stuart ...”

“But why did you go and marry father?” demanded Jill reproachfully.

“I ... I was lonely ... and he was nice and good ... and I was fond of him,” faltered Mums.

“Shut up, Jill,” said Anthony.

“If she hadn’t, you and P.G. would never have been born,” said Dr. Blythe, coming in with a smile.

“So you see,” said P.G., “and what I want to know is this ... is anybody going to have any eats tonight?”

“So you see it’s all right now,” said Anthony. “We’re all going to live here and the parrot room will be yours, Jill. And we’ll start up that old clock since time has begun to function for me again. Mrs. Blythe, will you do us the honour of setting it going?”

“Are you really going to be our dad?” demanded Jill, when she had got her breath.

“As soon as law and gospel can make me.”

“Oh!” Jill gave a rapturous sigh. “That is what P.G. and I have been pretending right along!”

The Fourth Evening

TO A DESIRED FRIEND

*I have a right to you ...
In your face I read you, witty, loving, loyal,
Made for discontents divine, satisfactions royal,
We will dare more greatly, faring on a common way ...
I know that we can be young and old together,
Playing life's great game with zest, caring little whether
Gain or loss come of it, so the game be worth the play.
I would not be friends with all ... friendship is too fine
To be thus worn threadbare out ... but you are mine!*

*I know we love the same things ...
Little wandering stars, all the timeless rapture
Of a windy night when our thoughts are safe from capture,
All the pale witcheries or old enchanted woods.
We can walk the open road when rainy twilights linger,
Or when sunset touches us with a golden finger,
Or be intimate with moonlight in gypsy solitudes.
Shining autumns will be ours, white immortal Mays,
Nights that will be purple pearls, binding in our days.*

*We will give each other
The right good gift of a laughter free from malice,
Glowing words that fall blood-red as drops from a chalice,
Daring to be silent, too, because we trust.*

*We will be merry when the firelight purrs and flashes,
We will sorrow together over the white ashes,
When our high dreams have gone into the dust.
Nice old rooms will nicer be for our jolly talks,
Gardens will the dearer be for our remembered walks.*

*We have a right to each other ...
A right to the savour and tang of losing and keeping,
A right to a fellowship in sowing and reaping,
Oh, there will not be time for all we have to tell!
We have lost too much in the years that are behind us,
Let us take and hold now what is given to bind us.
Here's my hand ... take it as frankly ... all will be well ...
Till the last lure beckons, till the road makes end,
You and I will keep our step, friend with friend.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “Good stuff, Anne. I really had no idea I had such a clever wife. Boys, remember there is nothing better than a good, loyal friend. One such friend is worth a million acquaintances.”

WALTER, *thinking*:- “I hope I’ll meet a friend like that some day.” a voice no one hears:- “You will. And his name will be death.”

SUSAN baker, *thinking*:- “I wonder why I shivered just now. My old Aunt Lucinda would say someone was walking over my grave.”

Fancy's Fool

Esme did not want particularly to spend the weekend at Longmeadow, as the Barrys called their home on the outskirts of Charlottetown.

She would have preferred to wait until she had definitely decided to marry Allardyce before becoming a guest in his home. But Uncle Conrad and Aunt Helen both thought she should go and Esme had been so used all her life to doing exactly what her uncles and aunts on both sides thought she should do that she ran true to form in this as in many other things.

Besides, it was all but settled that she should marry Allardyce. Dr. Blythe, out at Glen St. Mary, who knew the family well, though he had never had anything to do with them in a professional way, told his wife it was a shame. He knew something about Allardyce Barry.

Of course he was considered a great catch. People thought he was a surprisingly great catch for a misty little thing like Esme to pick up. Even her own clan was amazed.

Sometimes Esme thought secretly ... she had a great many secret thoughts since she had no especial friend or confidant ... that her luck was rather too much for her. She liked Allardyce well enough as a friend ... but she did not know ... exactly ... how she was going to like him as a husband.

Was there anyone else? Decidedly not. It was folly to think about Francis. There never had been any Francis ... not really. Esme felt that even imaginative Mrs. Blythe ... who lived away out at Glen St. Mary but whom Esme had met several times and liked very much ... would feel quite sure about that.

Esme felt sure she ought to feel quite sure herself. Only ... she could never manage to feel quite sure. He had seemed so very real in those lovely, long-ago, stolen moments at Birken-trees in the moonlit garden.

Since her childhood she had never met Allardyce's mother. The Barrys had lived abroad since the death of Allardyce's father. It was only six months since they had come home and opened up Longmeadow for the summer.

All the girls were "after" Allardyce ... so Uncle Conrad said. All except Esme.

Perhaps that was why Allardyce had fallen in love with her. Or perhaps it was just because she was so different from anyone else. She was a pale, lovely thing, delicate and reserved. Her relatives always complained that they could "make nothing of her." She seemed like a child of twilight. Grey things and starriness were of her. She moved gently and laughed seldom but her little air of sadness was beautiful and bewitching.

"She will never marry," Anne Blythe told her husband. "She is really too exquisite for the realities of earth."

"She will likely marry some brute who will misuse her," said Dr. Blythe. "That kind always do."

"Anyhow, he has very nice ears," said Susan Baker, who never had had, so she averred, any chance of marriage.

Men who met Esme always wanted to make her laugh. Allardyce succeeded. That was why she liked him. He said so many whimsical things that one had to laugh.

And had not Francis, long ago, said whimsical things? She was almost sure although she could not remember them. She could only remember him.

"So the ugly ducking has turned out a swan," twinkled Mrs. Barry when they met ... by way of setting Esme at ease.

But Esme, had Mrs. Barry but known it, was not in any special need of that. She was always quite mistress of herself under the fine aloofness which so many mistook for shyness ... so many except Mrs. Dr. Blythe and she lived too far away for frequent meetings.

And Esme did not quite like Mrs. Barry's implication that she had been a plain child who had unaccountably grown up into beauty. She had not been a very pretty child, perhaps, but she had never been accounted an ugly one. And had not Francis once told her ...

Esme shook herself. There was no Francis ... never had been any Francis. She *must* remember that if she were going to marry Allardyce

Barry and be chatelaine of this beautiful Longmeadow ... which was just a little too big and splendid and wonderful, now that it was re-opened.

Esme felt she would have been much more at home in a smaller place ... like Ingleside at Glen St. Mary for instance ... or ... or Birkentrees. She felt suddenly homesick for Birkentrees.

But nobody lived there now. It had been shut up and left to ruin, ever since Uncle John Dalley's death ... owing to some legal tangle she never understood.

She hadn't seen it for twelve years, although it was only three miles from Uncle Conrad's place. She really had never wanted to see it again. She knew it must be weed-grown and deserted. And she knew she was a little afraid to see it ... without Aunt Hester.

Strange Aunt Hester! Esme, recalling her, shivered.

But she never shivered when she thought of Francis. Sometimes she could feel her little childish hand in his big strong one yet. She never shivered but it frightened her a little. Suppose ... suppose ... she were to go like Aunt Hester!

She did not see the picture till the next afternoon. Then Allardyce showed her all over the house and when they came to what had been his father's den it was hanging on the wall in the shadows.

Esme's cool, white face flushed to a warm rose when she saw it and then turned whiter than ever.

"Who ... who is that?" she said faintly ... very much afraid of the answer.

"That," said Allardyce carelessly ... he was not much interested in old things and had already made up his mind that he and Esme would not spend much of their time at Long-meadow. There was more fun to be had elsewhere. But it would be a very good place for his mother to spend her declining years. She had always been a little drag on Allardyce. Esme wouldn't. She would do just as he told her ... go just where he wanted to go. And if there were other ... ladies ... she would never believe tales about them or make a fuss if she did. Dr. Blythe of Glen St. Mary could have told him a different story, but Allardyce did not know Dr. Blythe or would not have had much opinion of his views if he had. He had met Mrs. Blythe once ... and tried to flirt with her ... but he had not tried a second time and

always shrugged his shoulders meaningly when he heard her name mentioned. He said red-headed women were his abomination.

“That,” said Allardyce, “was my great-uncle Francis Barry ... a daredevil young sea captain of the sixties. He was captain of a brigantine when he was only seventeen years old. Can you believe it? Took her down to Buenos Aires with a cargo of lumber and died there. They say it broke his mother’s heart. He was the apple of her eye. Luckily hearts don’t break so easily nowadays.”

“Don’t they?” said Esme.

“Of course not ... else how could anybody live? But she was a Dalley and there was always something a little queer about them, I’ve been told. Took things much harder than it does to do in this kind of a world. We’ve got to be hard-boiled or we go under. Uncle Francis was a dashing young blade by all accounts. But you’ll have to go to mother if you want family history. She revels in it. But what is the matter, Esme? You don’t look just right, honey. It’s too hot here. Let’s get out where the air is fresh. This old house has got musty through the years. I told mother so when she took a notion to come here. Though I’m glad she did since I’ve met *you*.”

Esme let him lead her to a vine-screened corner of the veranda. She felt a relief to feel a solid seat under her. She took hard hold of its arms for her comforting.

They at least were real ... the grassy lawns around her were real ... Allardyce was real ... too real.

And Francis was. Or had been real! She had just seen his picture!

But he had died in the sixties. And it was only fourteen years since she had danced with him in the little, locked garden at Birkentrees!

Oh, if she could have a talk about it with Mrs. Blythe! Esme felt that *she* would understand. Was she going crazy like queer Aunt Hester? In any case she felt that Allardyce ought to know. It was his right.

She had never said a word about it to a living soul. But he must know if she were going to marry him. *Could* she marry him after this? Would he want to marry her? But as to that she did not greatly care. Francis had been real ... sometime ... and that was all that mattered.

She told Allardyce the bare bones of it only but as she told it she lived over everything again in detail.

She had been only eight. She was a child whose father and mother were dead and who lived around with various uncles and aunts.

She had come to spend the summer at Birkentrees, the old homestead of the clan. Uncle John Dalley lived there ... an oldish man, the oldest of the large family of which her father had been the youngest son.

Aunt Jane, who had never married, lived there, too, and Aunt Hester. Strange Aunt Hester! Aunt Jane was old ... at least Esme thought so ... but Aunt Hester was not very old ... no more than twenty-five, Esme had heard somebody say.

She had been strange in all the summers that Esme had spent at Birkentrees. Esme heard somebody say ... she was so quiet that she was always hearing people say things that they would never have dreamed of saying before a more talkative child ... that Aunt Hester's lover had died when she was twenty. So much Esme, sitting on her little stool, her elbows on her chubby knees, her round chin cupped in her hands, had found out as the "grown-ups" laughed and gossiped. And Aunt Hester had never been "the same" since.

Most children were afraid of her but Esme was not. She liked Aunt Hester, who had haunted, tragic eyes and did little but wander up and down the long birch lane of Birkentrees and talk to herself, or to someone she fancied was there with her. This, thought Esme, was what made people call her "queer."

She had a dead white face and strange, jet-black hair, just as Esme had. Only at that time Esme's hair always fell over her amber eyes in a neglected fringe, giving her a doggy sort of look.

Sometimes she even ventured to slip one of her little, slender hands ... even at eight Esme had very beautiful hands ... into Aunt Hester's cold one and walk silently with her.

"I wouldn't dare do that for a million dollars," one of the visiting cousins had said to her extravagantly.

But Aunt Hester did not seem to mind it at all ... although as a rule she resented anyone's company.

"I walk among the shadows," she told Esme. "They are better company than I find in the sunlight. But you should like the sunlight. I liked it once."

“I do like the sunlight,” said Esme, “but there is something about the shadows that I like, too.”

“Well, if you like the shadows come with me if you want to,” said Aunt Hester.

Esme loved Birkentrees. And most of all she loved the little garden which she was never allowed to enter ... which nobody, as far as she knew, ever entered.

It was locked up. There was a high fence around it and a rusty padlock on the gate. Nobody would ever tell her why it was locked up but Esme gathered that there was something strange about it. None of the servants would ever go near it after nightfall.

Yet it looked harmless enough, as far as could be seen through the high fence screened with roses and vines run wild.

Esme would have liked to explore it ... or thought she would. But one summer twilight, when she was lingering near it, she suddenly felt something strange in the air about her.

She could not have told what it was ... could not have described her sensations. But she felt as if the garden was drawing her to it!

Her breath came in quick little gasps. She wanted to yield but she was afraid to. Little fine beads broke out on her forehead. She trembled. There was no one in sight, not even queer Aunt Hester.

Esme put her hands over her eyes and ran blindly to the house.

“Whatever is the matter, Esme?” asked tall, grim, kind Aunt Jane, meeting her in the hall.

“The ... the garden wants me,” cried Esme, hardly knowing what she said ... and certainly not what she meant.

Aunt Jane looked a little grey.

“You had better not play too near that ... that place again,” she said.

The warning was needless. Yet Esme continued to love it.

One of the servants told her it was “haunted.” Esme did not then know what “haunted” meant. When she asked Aunt Jane the latter looked angrier than Esme had ever seen her look and told her she must not listen to the foolish gossip of servants.

There came a summer when she found Aunt Hester much changed. Esme had expected this. She had heard the older people say that Hester

was “much better” ... so much happier and more contented. Perhaps, they said, she might “come all right” yet.

Certainly Aunt Hester looked happier. She never walked in the birch lane now or talked to herself. Instead, she sat most of the time by the lily pool with the face of one who listened and waited. Esme felt at once that Aunt Hester was simply waiting. And for what?

But in her secret soul Esme felt that the grown-ups were all wrong. Aunt Hester *did* look happier ... but she was not really any “better.” But Esme did not say so to anyone. She knew her opinion did not count for anything with anybody. She was “only a child.”

But before she had been very long at Birkentrees Esme found out what it was for which Aunt Hester was waiting.

One night she was out on the lawn when she should have been asleep. But Aunt Jane was away and old Mrs. Thompson, the housekeeper, was in bed with a headache. So there was no one to look after Esme ... who thought she was quite able to look after herself.

There were people who did not agree with her. Dr. and Mrs. Blythe, passing by on their way home to Glen St. Mary from Charlottetown, did not.

“They should not allow that child to associate so much with Hester Dalley,” said the doctor.

“I’ve often felt that way myself,” said Anne Blythe, “and yet why shouldn’t she?”

“Minds act and react on each other,” said the doctor, rather shortly. “At least, some minds. It mightn’t hurt Nan or Diana a mite ... but the Dalleys are different. Most of them never know what is reality and what is imagination.”

“People always told me that I had too much imagination,” said Anne.

“This is a different kind of imagination. And Esme Dalley is a very impressionable child ... far too much so, indeed. If she were my daughter I confess I should feel a little anxious about her. But she has no parents to look after her and nobody appears to think there is any harm in letting her associate so much with her Aunt Hester.”

“And is there?” asked Anne. “I had no parents to remember either, you know.”

“But you had a good deal of common sense mixed up with your imagination, Anne-girl,” said the doctor, smiling at her ... the smile that always made Anne’s heart beat a little faster, in spite of years of wifehood and motherhood.

“Gilbert, is Hester Dalley really out of her mind?”

“Ask a psychiatrist that, not me,” smiled Gilbert. “I don’t think she could be certified as insane. At least, nobody has ever tried. Perhaps she is quite sane and it is the rest of the world who are insane. And some people hold that everyone is a little insane, on some point or other. Susan thinks lots of people crazy whom you and I regard as quite normal.”

“Susan says Hester Dalley is ‘cracked,’” said Anne.

“Well, we’ll leave it at that, since we can’t do anything about it,” said Gilbert. “Only, I repeat my opinion that if Esme Dalley were my niece or daughter I would see to it that she was not too much with her Aunt Hester.”

“Without being able to give a single good reason for such an opinion,” taunted Anne.

“Exactly ... just like a woman,” riposted the doctor.

Meanwhile Esme was thinking it would be wicked to sleep on such a beautiful night. It was a night that belonged to the fairies ... a night drenched in the glimmer and glamour of a magnificent full moon. And while she sat alone by the lily pond, with old dog Gyp for company, Aunt Hester came gliding over the lawn.

She was wonderfully gowned in white and had pearls in her black hair. She looked, thought Esme, like a bride she had once seen.

“Oh, Aunt, how beautiful you are!” cried Esme ... all at once realizing that Aunt Hester was still a young woman. “Why don’t you always dress like that?”

“This was to have been my wedding dress,” said Aunt Hester. “They keep it locked away from me. But I know how to get it when I want it.”

“It is lovely ... and so are you,” said Esme, to whom fashion as yet meant nothing.

“Am I lovely?” said Aunt Hester. “I am glad. I want to be beautiful tonight, little Esme. If I share a secret with you will you keep it very faithfully?”

Oh, wouldn't she! Esme thought it would be wonderful to share a secret only they two knew.

"Come, then."

Aunt Hester held out her hand and Esme took it. They went across the lawn and through the long moonlit lane of birches. Old Gyp followed them, but when they came to the locked gate of the little, old garden, he drew back with a growl. The hair on his back rose like bristles.

"Gyp, come on," said Esme. But Gyp drew back a little further.

"Why does he act like that?" asked Esme. She had never seen Gyp behave like that before.

Aunt Hester made no answer. She merely unlocked the padlock with a rusty old key that seemed to turn as easily as if it had never known rust.

Esme drew back.

"Are we going in there?" she whispered timidly.

"Yes. Why not?"

"I ... am a little ... afraid," confessed Esme.

"You need not be afraid. Nothing will harm you."

"Then why do they keep the garden always locked?"

"Because they know no better," said Aunt Hester scornfully. "Long, long ago little Janet Dalley went in there ... and never came out again. I suppose that is why they keep the garden locked. As if she couldn't have come out if she had wanted to!"

"Why did she never come out again?" whispered Esme.

"Who knows? Perhaps she liked the company she found there better than what she left behind."

Esme thought this was just one of Aunt Hester's "queer" sayings.

"Perhaps she fell over the stone wall into the river," she said. "Only, if that was so, why was her little body never found?"

"No one has to stay in the garden against her will," said Aunt Hester impatiently. "You need not be afraid to come into the garden with me, Esme."

Esme *did* feel a little afraid still but she would not admit it for worlds.

She clung very closely to Aunt Hester as the latter opened the gate and went through. Gyp turned and ran. But Esme forgot all about him. And she suddenly forgot all her fear, too.

So this was the strange ... the forbidden ... garden! Why, there was nothing very terrible about it. In fact, nothing terrible at all. Why on earth did they keep it locked up and untended? Oh, yes, Esme remembered that it was supposed to be “haunted.” She was quite ready to call that nonsense now. Somehow she had a strange feeling that she had come home.

The garden was less overgrown than might have been expected. But it had a lonely look in the moonlight, as if it, like Aunt Hester, were waiting ... waiting. There were a great many weeds, but along the south wall a row of tall lilies looked like saints in the moonglow. There were some young poplars on which the leaves were trembling and in one corner was a slim white birch which Esme knew ... but could not have told how she knew ... that some long-ago bride had planted.

Here and there were dim paths on which lovers of half a century ago had walked with their ladies. One of the paths, flagged with thin sandstones from the shore, ran through the middle of the garden to the river shore, where there was no fence ... only a low stone wall to keep the garden from running into the river.

There ... why, there was someone in the garden. A young man was coming up the sandstone path, with outstretched hands.

And Aunt Hester, who never smiled, was smiling.

“Geoffrey!” she said.

Then Esme knew what “haunted” meant but she was not in the least afraid. How foolish to be afraid. She sat on the stone wall while Aunt Hester and Geoffrey paced up and down the walks and talked in low tones.

Esme could not hear what they said and she did not want to. She only knew that she would have liked to come to the garden every night ... and stay there. No wonder Janet Dalley had not come back.

“Will you bring me here again?” she asked Aunt Hester, when they finally left it.

“Would you like to come?” asked Aunt Hester.

“Yes ... oh, yes.”

“Then you must never tell anyone you have been here,” said Aunt Hester.

“Of course I won’t if you don’t want me to,” said Esme. “But why, Aunt Hester?”

“Because there are so few people who understand,” said Aunt Hester. “I did not understand until this summer. But I do now ... and I am very happy, Esme. But we can go into the garden only on full moonlight nights ... it is sometimes hard to wait so long. We must have some playmates for you next time. You understand now why Janet Dalley never came back, don’t you?”

“But Janet Dalley went into the garden over sixty years ago,” cried Esme, some of her fear coming back.

“There is no time in the garden,” said Aunt Hester, smiling tranquilly. “Janet could come back even now if she wanted to. But nobody ever does want to.”

“I don’t want to go away forever,” whispered Esme.

“You do not have to. I said you could come back whenever you wanted to. Now we will go to bed and you will not think of this again until the next full moon ... and you will not tell a word of it to anyone.”

“Oh, no, no,” said Esme.

It was the last thing she wanted to do. Perhaps Dr. Blythe was quite right in his opinion. At any rate Anne Blythe, bending over her sleeping daughters that night, thanked God there was no Dalley blood in them. As for Susan Baker, she did not know anything about it, but if she had she would have said,

“I don’t know what those people are thinking of to let Esme Dalley spend so much time at Birkentrees with that crazy woman. You needn’t tell me craziness isn’t catching. Some kinds are.”

Esme found it very hard to wait for the next full moon. Sometimes she thought she must have dreamed it all. The garden looked so much the same by daylight as it always had. She did not know whether she hoped or feared she had.

But the next full moon did come and again Esme went with Aunt Hester to the little garden. The first night there had been no one there except the young man Aunt Hester called Geoffrey ... whom in the meantime Esme had found out was her lover. Esme thought this should have frightened her ... and it did. She made up her small mind that she would not go into the garden again with Aunt Hester.

But when the night of the full moon came she was wild to go. Geoffrey was there again and he and Aunt Hester walked on the stone paths as

before while Esme sat on the stone wall, just where there was a little hollow filled with fragrant fern, and wondered why she had ever been afraid of the garden.

It was very different that night. It seemed to be full of people who came and went. Girls with laughing, dreamy eyes ... slender women like pale flames ... slim boys ... twinkling children. None of them took any notice of Esme except a little girl of about her own age ... a little girl with golden hair cut low over her brow and great, wistful eyes.

Esme could not have told how she knew the little girl's name was Janet, but she did. Janet stopped as she was running by in pursuit of a silvery green moth and beckoned to Esme. Esme was on the point of following her ... she often wondered what would have happened if she *had* followed ... when Francis came.

She never understood either how she knew his name was Francis. But she did understand that she had always known him. He was tall and slender, with a boyish face on which an air of command sat strangely.

He had thick brown hair, parted in the middle, and shining dark-blue eyes. He took Esme's hand in his and they walked about the garden and talked. She could never remember what they talked about but she knew he made her laugh.

When Esme remembered Janet and turned to look for her Janet had gone. Esme never saw her again. She did not greatly care. Francis was so funny and wonderful ... he was the best of comrades. Then they danced on the open grassy space around the old, dried-up fountain where wild mint grew so thickly. It smelt so beautifully when they trod on it.

And the music to which they danced made Esme tremble with delight ... and something that was not quite delight. She could not understand where the music came from and Francis only laughed when she asked him. His laugh was more delightful than any music. Esme had never heard anyone laugh so delightfully.

None of the other people who came and went spoke to them or took any notice of them. Aunt Hester never came near them. She was always with Geoffrey.

Aunt Jane was a little worried about Esme those days. She thought the child was moping. She did not run about or play as usual, but sat, like Hester, on the lawn with a dreamy, waiting face.

“I wish we could go to the garden every night,” she said to Aunt Hester.

“They only come on the nights when the moon is full,” said Aunt Hester. “Watch when the moon comes back. When it is full and casts a shadow on the birch lane we will go again.”

Dr. Blythe happened to call at Birkentrees that day and the next time he saw Esme’s Uncle Conrad he told him to take his niece away from Birkentrees as soon as possible.

But the problem was solved in a different way. When the August moon was near fullness Aunt Hester was dead. She had died very quietly in her sleep, and her face was young and smiling and happy. The doctor said her heart had been affected for some time.

She lay with flowers clasped in her pale, beautiful hands and her clan came and looked at her ... and the women cried a little ... and all felt secretly relieved that the problem of “poor Hester” had been decently and effectively solved.

Esme was the only one who cried very much.

“She has gone to be with Geoffrey for always,” thought Esme, “but I shall never see Francis again.”

At first the thought seemed more than she could bear. She had never gone back to Birkentrees after that summer. Uncle John had died and Aunt Jane had moved to Charlottetown.

But Esme had never quite forgotten. She always came to the conclusion that she had dreamed it all. And just as often as she concluded this she knew, somehow, she hadn’t.

“And that picture of your great-uncle, Allardyce. He was the Francis I saw in the garden ... the Francis I never saw in life. Was Sally right when she said the garden was haunted? I think she must have been.”

Allardyce gave a roar of laughter and squeezed her hand. Esme shivered. She wished Allardyce wouldn’t laugh like that ... wouldn’t look at her with that ready, easy, meaningless ... yes, it *was* meaningless ... smile of his. She suddenly felt that he was a stranger.

And he had a ready common-sensible explanation.

“Sally was nothing but a superstitious goose,” he said. “Your Aunt Hester was quite ... well, to put it plainly, out of her mind. Oh, I’ve heard all about her. She just imagined she saw people in the garden ... and somehow she made you see them, too ... or think you saw them. You are

such a sensitive, impressionable little thing, you know. And I daresay you imagined a good bit yourself ... children do, you know. They haven't just got the power to distinguish between what is real and what is imagination. You just ask my mother the queer things I used to tell her."

"Aunt Hester never saw your great-uncle Francis, nor did I," said Esme. "How could we have imagined him?"

"She must have seen his picture. She was often at Long-meadow when she was a girl. It was here she met Geoffrey Gordon, you know ... a sap, if ever there was one. But she was wild about him. For that matter you may have been here yourself when you were too young to remember, and seen the picture. Now, don't think any more about this, honey-child. It's foolish to monkey with spooks. They're interesting things but dangerous. So irresponsible, you see. And I don't deny I like a good ghost yarn myself once in a while. But for a steady thing they're not good diet."

"All the same ... I can't marry you ... ever," said Esme.

Allardyce stared at her.

"Esme ... you're joking!"

But Esme was not joking. She had a hard time to make Allardyce believe she was in earnest but she finally succeeded. He went off in a tremendous huff, trying to make himself believe that it was just as well not to marry anyone with Dalley blood in them. His mother was furious ... and relieved. Why, there was an Italian princess who was crazy about him, as everybody knew. And that insignificant little Esme Dalley had actually turned him down!

Esme had a very hard time of it with Uncle Conrad and Aunt Helen. It was impossible to make them understand. They and the whole clan thought she was an utter little idiot.

The only ones who really approved her action were Dr. and Mrs. Blythe. And as Esme never knew they did, it did not comfort her much.

"A bad egg, that same Allardyce Barry," said the doctor.

"Not having met him very often, I take your word for it," said Anne.

"I never believed a word about that yarn about the Rooshian princess," said Susan.

One early October evening Esme found herself alone. Everyone had gone out. It was going to be a moonlit evening with a full moon.

It made her think of the old garden at Birkentrees ... and strange Aunt Hester ... angry Allardyce Barry ... and all the trouble of that dreadful time ... for which Esme knew she had never been forgiven. The clan only tolerated her now.

She found herself trembling a little with the thought and the desire that suddenly came to her ... the thought of the little locked garden by the river shore and the desire to see it once more. Who knew what dim, lovely things waited there for her still?

Well, why shouldn't she? It was only three miles to Birken-trees by a cross-country cut and Esme had always been a good walker in spite of her ethereal looks.

An hour later she was at Birkentrees.

The old house came out darkly against the sunset sky. Its grim shadow lay across the lawn and the spruce wood beyond it had turned black. There was an air of neglect over everything. Disputes among the heirs had prevented a sale.

But Esme was not interested in the house. She had come to walk on the secret paths of her enchanted garden once more and she hurried to the birch lane that led to it.

Dr. Gilbert Blythe, whizzing by in his car, saw her and recognized her.

"What on earth is that girl doing alone at that forsaken old place?" he wondered a little uneasily. He had heard tales that summer that Esme Dalley was "getting queer" like her Aunt Hester. The said tales emanated mostly from people who had said Allardyce Barry had "jilted" her.

Dr. Blythe wondered if he should stop and go over and offer her a drive home. But he had a serious case waiting for him in the Glen ... and besides he had a feeling that Esme would not come. Anne always said that Esme Dalley had an iron will under all her sweetness and the doctor had a great deal of respect for the intuition of his wife.

Whatever Esme had come to Birkentrees for she would carry out her intention. So he went on. In after days he boasted that he had at least made one match by leaving things alone.

"I suppose you will never leave off twitting me," said Anne.

"Oh, I am sure he does not mean to do that, Mrs. Dr. dear," said Susan. "It is just his way. I am told the men are all like that ... though," she added with a sigh, "I myself have never had any chance of proving it."

The gate to the garden was no longer locked but hung open slackly. It all seemed smaller than Esme remembered it. There were only withered leaves and frosted stalks where she had danced with Francis ... where she had imagined or dreamed she had danced with Francis.

But it was still beautiful and eerie, full of the strange, deep shadows that come with the rising of the hunter's moon. There was no noise but the sigh of the wind in the remote, pointed firs that had grown up of their own accord among the still golden maples in a corner.

Esme felt lonelier than she had ever felt in her life as she went down the grass-grown path to the river shore.

"There isn't any *you*," she whispered piteously, thinking of Francis. "There never was any you. What a little fool I have been! I suppose I shouldn't have used Allardyce so. No wonder they were all so cross with me. No wonder Mrs. Barry was glad."

For Esme had never heard the tales about Allardyce's foreign life and the Italian or Russian princesses. To her Allardyce was still the man who made her laugh a little like Francis had ... the Francis who had never existed.

She wondered a little what had become of the picture of Great-uncle Francis when the Barrys had closed Longmeadow and gone abroad again ... this time it was said for good. Mrs. Barry had reported, so rumour ran, that they did not mean to return to Canada. Everything was so crude here ... and all the girls pursued Allardyce. She was afraid he would make some silly match. Esme Dalley had almost hooked him ... but thank the Lord she had failed. Allardyce had come to his senses in time.

Esme was thinking of the picture. Somehow, she would have liked to have it ... even if it were only the picture of a dream.

But when she got to the old stone wall ... most of which had fallen down ... she saw him coming up the steps from the river. The steps were very loose and some were missing altogether, so that he was picking his way a bit carefully. But he was just the same as she remembered him ... a little taller, perhaps, and dressed in a more modern fashion, but with the same thick brown hair and the same adventurous light in his blue eagle eyes. He and Jem Blythe were to share a German prison after some years but nobody dreamed anything about that then.

The long, dim river and the deserted garden and the pointed firs whirled around Esme.

She threw out her hands and would have fallen if he had not caught her as he sprang over the crumbling wall.

“Francis!” gasped Esme.

“Francis is my middle name but my friends call me Stephen,” he said, smiling ... the same frank, friendly, pleasant smile she remembered so well.

Esme recovered herself a little and drew away, but she was still trembling so violently that he kept his arm around her ... just as Francis had done.

“I am afraid I have frightened you,” he said gently. “I’m sorry my appearance was so abrupt. I know I’m not handsome but I didn’t think I was so ugly that I would scare a girl into nearly fainting.”

“It’s ... it’s not that,” said Esme, quite conscious now that she had made an awful fool of herself. Perhaps she *was* queer ... like Aunt Hester.

“Perhaps I’m trespassing ... but the place looked so deserted ... and they told me I could take this shortcut. Please forgive me for frightening you.”

“Who are you?” cried Esme wildly. Nothing mattered but that.

“A very humble individual ... Stephen Francis Barry at your service. My home is at the Coast but I came east a few days ago to take charge of the new biological station down at the harbour. I knew I had ... or once had ... some distant cousins over this way at a place called Longmeadow so I thought I’d come over this evening and hunt them up if they were still here. Somebody else told me they had gone abroad. What is the truth? ... as somebody called Pilate once said.”

Esme knew now who he was ... a western third cousin she had heard Allardyce speak of ... contemptuously enough.

“He works,” Allardyce had said, as if that were something shameful. “I’ve never seen him ... none of the family have ever been east ... too busy studying bugs, I suppose. Or else for lack of spondulicks. In any case our branch of the family have never had anything in common with them. I did hear Dr. Blythe had met one of them called Stephen or some such name when he was attending some medical congress in Vancouver and thought he was a very fine fellow. But my opinion and the good doctor’s do not often agree.”

Esme drew a little further away still, looking gravely at him. She had no idea how exquisitely lovely she looked in the velvet and shadow of the moonlight, but Stephen Barry had. He stood and looked at her as if he could never get enough of looking.

“It was not your sudden appearance that startled me,” said Esme gravely. “It was because you looked so much like somebody I once saw ... no, like somebody I dreamed I saw. A picture of Captain Francis Barry that used to be at Longmeadow.”

“Great-uncle Frank? Granddad always told me I looked like him. I wish I could see it. Do I really look as much like this Francis as all that?”

“You look exactly like him.”

“Then no wonder you took me for a ghost. And you? I think I must have dreamed you years ago. You have just stepped out of my dream. Won’t you be unconventional and tell me who you are?”

“I am Esme Dalley.”

Even in the moonlight she could see his face fall.

“Esme Dalley! Oh, I’ve heard ... Allardyce’s young lady! ...”

“No, no, no!” Esme cried it almost violently. “And there is nobody at Longmeadow. It is shut up and is for sale. Allardyce and his mother have gone abroad for good, I believe.”

“You believe? Don’t you know? Aren’t you his ... his fiancée?”

“No!” cried Esme again. For some mysterious reason she could not bear to have him think that. “There is no truth in that report. Allardyce and I are nothing but friends ... hardly even that,” she added, in her desire to be strictly truthful and recalling her last interview with Allardyce. “Besides, as I have told you, he and his mother have gone to Europe and are not expected to return.”

“Too bad,” said Stephen quite cheerfully. “I had counted on seeing them. I’m to be here a couple of months and relations liven things up a bit. Still ... there are compensations. I’ve seen you, ‘moving in moonlight through a haunted hour’ to me. Are you quite sure you are not a ghost, little Esme Dalley?”

Esme laughed ... delightful laughter.

“Quite sure. But I came here to meet a ghost ... I’ll tell you all about it sometime.”

She felt quite sure he would not laugh as Allardyce had done. And he would not try to explain it away. Besides, somehow or other, it mattered no longer whether it could be explained away or not. They would just forget it together.

“Let’s sit down here on this old stone wall and you can tell me all about it now,” said Stephen.

It was just about that time that Dr. Blythe was saying to his wife,

“I met Stephen Barry for a moment today. He is to be in Charlottetown for a few months. He is really a splendid fellow. I wish he and Esme Dalley would meet and fall in love. They would just suit each other.”

“Who is matchmaking now?” asked Anne sleepily.

“Trust a woman to have the last word,” retorted the doctor.

The Fifth Evening

MIDSUMMER DAY

*When the pale east glows like a rosy pearl
And a lyric dawn-wind is out in the meadows,
The morning comes like a lithe-limbed girl
Adance with a drift of filmy shadows;
Frolicking over the beaded dew,
Peeping the boughs of the pineland through,
And the laughter born of a myriad rills
Attends her over the dappled hills.*

*She sings a song that is glad and gay
With the heart o' morning's gayness and gladness,
She bids us forget the yesterday
With all its travail of failure and sadness;
Her little feet on the broidered heath
Are white as the daisies that spring beneath ...
A virgin nymph of the wild is she ...
An unwon, alluring divinity.*

*The noon is a drowsy sorceress,
Poppy crowned in a haunted valley,
Wooing us all with a mute caress
To loiter with her where the south winds dally;
Idly she weaveth a golden spell,
Soft as a song and sweet as a bell;*

*Idly she beckoneth ... come away,
We shall be hers for this one ripe day.*

*Perfume of incense and musk and rose
Hangs on the breath of her honeyed kisses,
All the magic the summer knows
Is ours at once in her wealth of blisses;
She offers to us her cup of dreams
Filled from her nectared Arcadian streams,
Under the dome of the slumberous sky
Drink we and let the world go by.*

*Evening comes as an angel fair
Over the hills of western glory,
With a mist of starshine upon her hair
In her lucent eyes a remembered story;
Walking graciously over the lands,
Benediction and peace in her hands,
Holding close to her ivory breast
Dear memories like infants hushed to rest.*

*Under the purring pines she sings
Where the clear, cold dewes are limpidly falling,
Hers is the wisdom of long-loved things,
Lo, in her voice we may hear them calling.
She will teach us the holy mystery
Of the darkness glimmering o'er the lea,
And we shall know ere we fall asleep
That our souls are given to her to keep.*

Anne Blythe

ANNE:- "It should be signed 'Anne Shirley.' I wrote it in my teens."
DR. BLYTHE:- "So you had poetic aspirations then ... and never told me?"

ANNE:- “I wrote it at Patty’s Place. And we were not on the best of terms those last two years, you remember? Would you have married me if you had known?”

DR. BLYTHE, *teasingly*:- “Oh, probably. But I should have been scared to death. I knew you wrote stories ... but poetry is a different matter.”

SUSAN, *taking all this literally*:- “The idea!”

REMEMBERED

*Through the shriek of the city comes to me
A whisper of some old ecstasy,
Dusk on the meadows and dusk on the sea;
Apple-blossoms cool with night,
Grey ghost-mists by the harbour light,
And a new moon setting sad and fair
Behind a hill that has knelt in prayer.*

*I had forgotten that far spruce hill
With its wind of darkness blowing chill,
Haunt of owl and of whippoorwill.
But now I think of it and know
That it has my heart wherever I go,
There with the friendship of wind and star,
Where one can believe the Green Folk are.*

*People rush by me mad and fleet
But I am not on this haggard street,
I am out where the shadows and silences meet
Round an old grey house that is dear to me
Between the hills and the calling sea,
Where one in the twilight magic may
Find a lost and lovely yesterday.*

*Red are the poppies there that blow
Spilling their silk on the paths I know,
White are the lilies as hillside snow.
And the roses that wait by the open door
Are waiting just to be friends once more,
The bluebells are ringing an elfin chime
And nobody there is a slave of time.*

*There once again I could be alone
With the night as kind as a friend well-known ...
I think I shall go and find my own.
With a dream for compass I'll steal away
To the hill that kneels and the house that is grey,
Where the sea and the dunes and the fir trees hold
A secret worth more than my tarnished gold.*

Anne Blythe

ANNE, *laughing*:- "I wrote that poem twenty years ago at Redmond ... and never could get an editor to accept it."

SUSAN, *over her knitting*:- "Which shows what poor judgment they had, Mrs. Dr. dear. But, speaking of apple blossoms, I am afraid we shall have a very poor crop this year. There are hardly any blossoms."

WALTER:- "But there are always new moons. I saw one last night in Rainbow Valley."

SUSAN:- "I admit I have seen hills that seemed to be praying. 'Don't be so fanciful, Susan,' my mother used to say. But as for the Green Folk, if you mean fairies, the less truck you have with them the better, in my humble opinion, Mrs. Dr. dear, even if they existed, which they do not."

WALTER:- "How do you know, Susan?"

SUSAN:- "Because I've never seen one." walter:- "Have you ever seen a pyramid?"

SUSAN, *admiringly*:- "There's no getting ahead of you."

DR. BLYTHE:- "It should be 'green' house, not 'grey,' shouldn't it?"

ANNE:- "Yes, but grey sounded more romantic to me then."

DR. BLYTHE:- "I remember the June lilies at Green Gables ... but as far as being a slave of time goes we are all that in one way or another, Anne-girl."

SUSAN:- "But a good deal depends on who is your master."

JEM:- "Gold, whether tarnished or not, is a very necessary thing in this world, mother."

SUSAN:- "Good sound sense for you."

DR. BLYTHE:- “So long as you are not its slave, Jem. Perhaps that is why the editors wouldn’t take your poem, Anne. They saw too little gold to be sympathetic with your scorn of it.”

A Dream Comes True

When Anthony Fingold left home on Saturday evening he intended merely to go down to the store at Glen St. Mary to get the bottle of liniment Clara wanted. Then he would come back and go to bed.

There would be nothing else to do, he sadly reflected. Get up in the morning ... work all day ... eat three meals ... and go to bed at half past nine. What a life!

Clara didn't seem to mind it. None of his neighbours in the Upper Glen seemed to mind it. Apparently they never got tired of the old routine. They hadn't enough imagination to realize what they were missing, probably.

When he remarked gloomily at the supper table ... it couldn't be denied that Clara cooked excellent suppers, though it never entered Anthony's head to tell her so ...

"There ain't been anything exciting in this part of the Island this summer ... not even a funeral,"

Clara had calmly reminded him that the Barnard washing at Mowbray Narrows had been stolen three weeks ago and that there had been a robbery at Carter Flagg's store at Glen St. Mary several weeks before ... and then she passed him the ginger cookies.

Did she think ginger cookies a substitute for impassioned longings and mad, wild, glamorous adventures?

Then she added insult to injury by remarking that Carter Flagg was offering bargains in pyjamas!

It was the one source of difference between him and Clara that she wanted him to wear pyjamas and he was determined he would never wear anything but nightshirts.

"Dr. Blythe wears pyjamas," Clara would say mournfully.

Anthony thought there was nobody on earth worth mentioning in the same breath with Dr. Blythe. Even his wife was a rather intelligent woman. As for Susan Baker, maid-of-all-work at Ingleside, he had been at feud with her for years. He always suspected that she put Clara up to the pyjama idea. In which he did them both a grievous wrong.

As for the Mowbray Narrows washing, of course it would have to be at Mowbray Narrows! No such good fortune for the Upper Glen or the Fingolds. And what did the robbery at Carter Flagg's store matter? Carter had lost only ten dollars and a roll of flannel. Why, it wasn't worth mentioning. And yet people had talked about it for days. Susan Baker had been up one evening and she and Clara had talked of nothing else ... unless the whispered conversation on the doorstep when Susan took her departure had to do with pyjamas. Anthony strongly suspected it had. He had seen the doctor buying a pair in Carter Flagg's store not long ago.

Anthony had never done anything more adventurous in his life than climb a tree or throw a stone at a strange dog. But that was Fate's fault, not his. Given anything of a chance he felt that he had it in him to be William Tell or Richard Coeur de Lion or any other of the world's gallant adventurers. But he had been born a Fingold of the Upper Glen in Prince Edward Island, so he had no chance of being a hero. It was all very well for Dr. Blythe to say the graveyards were full of men who had been greater heroes than any mentioned in history, but everyone knew the doctor's wife was romantic.

And had William Tell ever worn pyjamas? Not very likely. What *did* he wear? Why did books never tell you the things you really wanted to know? What a boon it would be if he could show Clara in a printed book that some great hero of history or romance had worn a nightshirt!

He *had* asked somebody once ... and the somebody ... he had forgotten who he was ... had said he didn't think they wore anything in those days.

But that was indecent. He couldn't tell anything like that to Clara.

Sometimes he thought it would have been a great thing even to have been a highwayman. Yes, with any luck he could have been a highwayman. Prowling all night as they did, they might not need either nightshirts or pyjamas.

Of course a great many of them got hanged ... but at least they had *lived* before death. And he could have been as bold and bad as he wanted to be,

dancing corantos on moonlit heaths with scores of voluptuous, enticing ladies ... they might as well be princesses while they were about it ... and of course he would return their jewels or gold for the dance. Oh, what life might have been! The Methodist minister in Lowbridge had preached once on "Dreams of what we might have been." Though he and Clara were rigid Presbyterians they happened to be visiting Methodist friends, so went with them.

Clara thought the sermon a very fine one. As if she ever had dreams! Unless it was of seeing him decked out in pyjamas! She was perfectly contented with her narrow existence. So was everybody he knew, or he thought so.

Well ... Anthony sighed ... it all came to this. He was only little, thin, pepper-and-salt Anthony Fingold, general handyman of the Glens, and the only excitement that ever came his way was stealing cream for the cat.

Clara found out about his stealing it but not until the cat had lapped it. She never scolded about it ... though he had a horrid conviction that she told Susan Baker all about it. What else would they be laughing about? He found himself hoping Susan would not tell Dr. or Mrs. Blythe. It was so paltry. And they might not think it was the proper thing for a church elder.

But he resented Clara's calm acceptance of his crime. All she said was, "That cat is as fat as butter now. And you could have all the cream you wanted for him if you had asked for it."

"She won't even quarrel with me," thought Anthony in exasperation. "If she'd only get mad once in a while things wouldn't be so tame. They say Tom Crossbee and his wife fight every day ... and that scratch he had on his face last Sunday was one she gave him. Even that would be something. But the only thing that riles Clara is that I won't wear pyjamas. And even then she doesn't say much except that they are more up-to-date. Well, I must endure my life as everyone else does ... 'God pity us all, who vainly the dreams of our youth recall.'"

Anthony couldn't remember where he had heard or learned those lines. But they certainly hit the mark. He sighed.

He met nobody but a tramp on his way to the store. The tramp had boots ... of a sort ... but no socks. His bare skin showed through the holes in his shirt. He was smoking and looked very contented and happy.

Anthony envied him. Why, this man could sleep out all night if he wanted to ... likely he did, with the whole sky for a roof. Nobody would pester him to wear pyjamas. How delightful it must be not to have any idea where you were going to sleep at night!

Dr. Blythe whirled by him in his new car. But he was so near to the Glen store that he did not offer him a ride. Anthony was just as well pleased. He liked Dr. Blythe ... but he always had a secret suspicion that the doctor was laughing at him. Besides, he had heard too much about his pyjamas.

Why did adventures come to everybody but him, Anthony Fingold? Old Sam Smallwood down at the Harbour Mouth was suspected of having been a pirate in his youth ... or of having been captured by pirates ... Anthony was not quite sure which. Old Sam always contrived to give the impression that it had been the former but the Smallwoods always liked to make themselves big. Jim Millar had narrowly escaped death in a train collision ... Ned MacAllister had been through a San Francisco earthquake ... even old Frank Carter had caught a hen thief single-handed and had been a witness in court.

Every man-jack of them had something to tell or talk about when tales were going round at night in Carter's store ... several of them had been written up in Delia Bradley's series of Island notables in the Charlottetown *Enterprise*. But he had never had his name in the paper except when he was married.

He had never sown any wild oats ... that was the trouble. So there was no harvest ... no enjoyment to look forward to ... nothing but years of monotony ... and then die in bed. In bed! Anthony groaned in spirit over such a colourless death. The only comfort was that it would be in a nightshirt. Fancy dying in pyjamas! He must put that idea up to Clara the next time she wanted him to get pyjamas. He had an idea that it would shock her a bit, in spite of her modern whims.

He had never even been drunk! Of course now it wouldn't do for an elder in the church to get drunk. But when he was young! Abner MacAllister was an elder now, too, but *he* had been drunk many a time in his youth, before he got converted. Durn it, had you to miss everything just for the sake of being an elder in middle life or old age?

It wasn't worth it!

He remembered that he had heard that Jimmy Flagg wore pyjamas ... and Jimmy was an elder. But then everyone knew what his wife was. Perhaps even the minister wore them. The idea came to Anthony with a shock. It had never occurred to him before. He felt that he could never enjoy Mr. Meredith's sermons as much again. He could forgive him all his absent-minded doings ... even his marrying again, which Anthony did not approve of ... but a minister who slept in pyjamas! He *must* find out. It would be easy enough. Susan Baker would know. She could see the washing line from Ingleside. But could he bring himself to ask her? No, never.

He would go down to the Glen some Monday and see for himself. Now that the question had entered his mind it must be answered.

They would never have elected him elder, he reflected, as he trotted along the village street, if they had known what a desperate fellow he was in reality. They never dreamed of the wild adventures and glorious deeds he was constantly having and performing in imagination.

When he raked and burned leaves on Sara Allenby's lawn he was fighting Indians on old frontiers; while he painted George Robinson's barn he was discovering a gold mine on the Rand; while he helped Marshall Elliott haul in his hay he was rescuing a beauteous maiden from drowning at great risk to himself; while he was putting up the storm windows at Ingleside he was blazing trails through primeval forests, treading where no other foot had trod; when he unloaded Augustus Palmer's coal he was being taken captive by a cannibal king on some savage island; while he helped Trench Moore cut ice he was stalking tigers in equatorial jungles; while he chopped wood and pattered about the garden he was in splendid peril exploring Polar seas; when he sat in church by the side of his impeccable Clara, in her honey-coloured Sunday crimps, he was robbing temples in Burma of emeralds as large as pigeon eggs ... or should it be rubies?

But his dreams, though they satisfied some dramatic urge in him, left him always with a mournful conviction that he had missed the best in life. Dreams would never make Caroline Wilkes look at him admiringly. And that was, and always had been, the master dream of Anthony Fingold's life ... the one he could never have spoken about to anyone ... to make Caroline Wilkes ... *nee* Caroline Mallard ... look at him admiringly. All poor Clara's

years of devotion were as nothing compared to that never-seen, never-to-be-seen admiration in Caroline's eyes.

Anthony heard a bit of news at the store which made him decide to return to the Upper Glen by the lower road. It was much longer than the upper road and much less interesting, there being no house along it, except Westlea ... the summer home the Wilkes family had built for themselves.

But Carter Flagg said the Wilkes were already at Westlea, coming early on account of the old lady's health. When Anthony anxiously enquired what was the matter with her Flagg said carelessly he had heard it was some kind of attacks ... a heart condition, so Susan Baker had been heard to say ... and this year, said Carter Flagg, she must be worse than common for they had brought a nurse with them and it was rumoured Dr. Blythe had been there more than once. He added that old lady Wilkes had always thought there was no one like Dr. Blythe, though she had been to specialists all over the world.

Anthony thought that, if he went home by the lower road, he might get a glimpse of Caroline if she happened to be about the grounds.

It was, he reflected sadly, a long time since he had seen her. She had not been in any of the churches around there for years. For the last two summers she had never been seen outside of Westlea ... that is, since it had been built.

Caroline Wilkes was ... and always had been ... the deeply cherished romantic passion of Anthony Fingold's life. When she had been little Caroline Mallard, going to Lowbridge school, he had worshipped her from afar. The Fingolds lived in Lowbridge then, and all the little boys of the school had worshipped Caroline Mallard.

When she had grown up naturally she moved in a far higher circle of society ... she was the leading merchant's daughter ... he still worshipped her from afar. Never did the slightest idea of trying to "court" her enter his head, save in his romantic dreams. He knew he might as well aspire to a king's daughter.

He suffered secret agonies when she married one of the wealthy Wilkes of Montreal ... whose people were really furious because he had stooped so low ... and he did not think Ned Wilkes worthy to tie her shoelaces.

But then, who would be? He went on worshipping her just the same. He saw her rarely ... only when she came home to visit her people in

Lowbridge. He always made it a point to be in Lowbridge church those Sundays.

He read everything he could find in the papers about her ... his family thought him crazy and extravagant because he insisted on taking a weekly Montreal paper that ran a society column.

There was often something ... she was entertaining a foreign nobleman or going to Europe or having a baby. She never seemed to grow old. In her photographs, as in his recollections of her, she was always stately and beautiful, seemingly untouched by time or trouble.

Yet she had her troubles, if rumour spoke truly. Ned Wilkes had hit the high spots in life, according to all accounts. But he had been dead for years and all her children were married ... two of them to English lords ... and she must be close on sixty now to all the world, except Anthony Fingold ... who still thought himself quite a young man.

In between times Anthony had courted and married Clara Bryant ... whose people thought she was throwing herself away. Anthony was very fond of Clara. She had always been a good, if unexciting wife, and in her youth she had been plump and pretty.

But his secret homage had always been given to Caroline Mallard ... Caroline Mallard of the sea-blue eyes and proud, cold, queen-like face. At least, that was how he recalled her. Most people thought her a good-looking girl who had been lucky enough to catch a rich husband.

But to Anthony she was a grand lady if ever there was one. An aristocrat to her backbone. It was a privilege to have loved her, even hopelessly ... a privilege to dream of serving her. He pitied the other boys who had loved and forgotten her. *He* had been faithful. He often told himself he would be willing to die any death you could think of if he could but once have touched her beautiful hand.

He never dared ask himself the question ... Would he have been willing to have worn pyjamas for her sake? Of course Ned Wilkes wore them. But then Ned Wilkes would do anything.

It would have amazed Anthony not a little if he had known that Clara knew all about his passion for Caroline Wilkes ... and did not care. *She* knew all that it amounted to. Just one of those crazy fancies of his. And *she* knew what Caroline Wilkes was like now and what ailed her. And why the Wilkes family had come to Prince Edward Island that year so early.

Everyone knew. It would have amazed Anthony had he known how much Clara knew. Perhaps it would amaze most husbands.

The years had not cooled his passion, thought Anthony proudly, as he started for home by the long lower road on the faint chance of getting a distant glimpse of her. Hearts never grew old. Caroline had never even known he loved her and yet he had spent his life worshipping her. Not but that he was very fond of Clara. He considered that he had been a very good husband to her ... as he had, and as Clara would have been the first to admit, except in one small matter ... a matter that made her sigh every time she drove past Ingleside and saw Susan Baker's washing hanging on the line. But then as Clara prudently reflected, you couldn't have everything. Poor old Susan was an old maid and the fact that Dr. Blythe wore pyjamas could never make up for that.

When Anthony stopped by the Westlea gates, for a sentimental look at the house which held his divinity, Abe Saunders came scurrying down the driveway. Abe was the general caretaker at Westlea, while his wife looked after the house. The Wilkes really spent very little time there. Abe and Anthony had never been on really friendly terms, partly because of some obscure old feud dating back to schooldays ... neither of them could have told you how it began ... and partly because Abe had once wanted Clara Bryant himself. He had forgotten that, too, being very well satisfied with the wife he had, but the feeling was there and both knew it.

So Anthony was much surprised when Abe buttonholed him rather distractedly and exclaimed,

"Tony, will you do me a favour? The wife and I have just got word that our girl over at the Narrows has been hurt in a car accident ... broke her leg, so they say ... and we've got to go over and see her. They are going to take her to the Charlotte-town hospital, and Dr. Blythe is in charge of the case. But still, when it's your own flesh and blood! Will you set in the house till Mr. Norman Wilkes comes home? He ought to be along any time now. He's motoring out from Charlottetown. The old lady is in bed asleep ... or pretending to be ... but that scalawag of a George has disappeared and we don't dast leave the house with no one in it."

"Ain't there a nurse?" gasped Anthony in amazement.

"She's got the evening off. Gave the old lady a hypo. That's all right ... Dr. Blythe's orders. All you'll have to do will be just to set in the sun

porch till somebody comes. Most likely George will soon turn up ... if he hasn't gone to see some girl down at the village. But for pity's sake don't take all the evening making up your mind."

"But what if she ... if Mrs. Wilkes ... takes one of her sinking spells?" gasped Anthony.

"She don't have sinking spells," said Abe impatiently. "It's ... it's something quite different. I ain't allowed to talk. But she won't have any kind of spell after the hypo. It puts her to sleep" ... "if that goose of a nurse didn't forget to give it to her," he reflected but was not going to say to Anthony ... "She'll sleep like a log till the morning ... always does. Will you or won't you? I didn't think you were the man to hesitate when a friend was in trouble. They may have whisked Lula off to the hospital before we get there."

Hesitate! When Abe and a distracted Mrs. Abe ... what if Clara went into hysterics like that? ... had whirled away in their wheezy old car, Anthony Fingold was sitting in the sunroom in a dream of bliss. He could hardly believe it was not all a dream.

Here he was in the same house with his long-worshipped Caroline ... on guard while she slumbered. Could anything be more romantic? Of course it would be just as well if Clara never heard of it ... and she would hear of it most likely. But he would have had the enjoyment of it in any case.

How he blessed George ... who was the orphan son of a poor cousin of the Mallards ... for disappearing! He hoped nobody would come home for hours. Smoke a pipe! Perish the irreverent thought! Nobody but a Saunders would think of suggesting such a thing. He would just sit there and try to remember all the poetry he knew. Clara would think he was at the store so she wouldn't be worried. Somehow he didn't want Clara to be worried in spite of his happiness.

"What are you doing there, little man?"

Anthony Fingold sprang up as if he had been shot and gazed in absolute consternation at the object standing in the sunroom doorway!

It couldn't be ... it couldn't be his Caroline ... simply *could not* ... his beautiful, romantic, glamorous, adored Caroline. In the last photograph of her he had seen in a Montreal paper she had been almost as young and handsome as ever.

But, if it was not Caroline, who was it ... this raddled old dame in a flannel nightdress ... a nightdress not half so pretty as the ones Clara wore ... which did not conceal her bony ankles? Thin grey hair hung in wisps about her wrinkled face and her mouth was drawn inward over toothless gums. Fancy Clara appearing before anyone without her false teeth! She would have died first.

There was a weird light in her sunken blue eyes and she was looking at him in a way that made his skin crinkle. And in one hand she held an implement which couldn't be anything but a dagger. Anthony had never seen a dagger but he had seen pictures of them and a thousand times he had imagined himself carrying one and running people through with it. But the reality was very different.

Who was it? There was no housekeeper at Westlea that he had ever heard of. In the few short summer weeks the Wilkes occasionally spent there the Saunders "did" for them. Had he fallen asleep and was dreaming? No, he was awake ... broad awake. Then had he suddenly lost his mind? His mother's great-grandfather had been insane. Yet he did not feel crazy. But then crazy people never did, he had been told. If George would only come! If the Saunders would only return!

"Well, now, if it isn't little Anthony Fingold who used to be so much in love with me!" said the apparition, brandishing her dagger. "Do you remember those good old days, Anthony? If I'd had the sense of a cat I'd have married you instead of Ned Wilkes. But we never have sense when we are young. Of course you will say you never asked me. But I could have easily made you. Every woman knows that. And how is Clara? How jealous she used to be of me!"

It was ... it must be ... Caroline. Poor Anthony put a hand to his head. When all your dreams come tumbling about you in one fell swoop it is hard to bear. He still hoped he was in a nightmare and that Clara would have sense enough to wake him.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Caroline again. "Tell me at once or ..." She brandished the dagger.

"I'm here ... I'm ... Abe Saunders asked me to stay till him and his wife got back," stammered Anthony. "They had to go ... his daughter had been in an accident and was going to the hospital ... and he didn't like to leave you alone."

“Who said his daughter had to go to the hospital?”

“Dr. Blythe, I believe ... I ...”

“Then she probably had to go. Dr. Blythe is the only man with any sense on Prince Edward Island. As for me, poor old Abe needn’t have been worried. Nobody could have run off with the house ... and don’t you think this would keep any robber at bay?”

Anthony looked at the gleaming dagger and thought it would.

“That gadabout of a nurse is out ... on the trail of some man,” said Caroline. “Oh, I know their tricks! You men are so easily fooled.”

“And George ...”

“Oh, I’ve hung George in the closet,” said Caroline. She suddenly shook with laughter. “I’ve always had a hankering to kill a man and at last I’ve done it. It’s a sensation, Anthony Fingold. Did *you* ever kill anybody?”

“No ... no ...”

“Ah, you don’t know what you’ve missed! It’s fun, Anthony ... great fun. You should have seen George kicking. And do you mean to tell me that you’ve never wanted to kill Clara? Especially when she begged of you to wear pyjamas?”

So everybody knew it! Susan Baker, of course. But it didn’t matter. Nothing mattered now. Suppose Caroline, having done away with George and wanting to repeat the sensation, attacked him, Anthony, with that dagger!

But Caroline was laughing.

“Why don’t you kiss me, little man?” she demanded. “People always kiss me. And you know very well you would have given your soul for a kiss from me a hundred years ago.”

Yes, Anthony knew it. Only it wasn’t a hundred years. How he had dreamed of kissing Caroline ... of snatching her up in his manly arms and covering her lovely face with kisses. He remembered with shame amid all his horror that when he used to kiss Clara he was wont to shut his eyes and imagine it was Caroline.

“Well, come and kiss me,” said Caroline, pointing the dagger at him. “I’d rather like it, you know. I always would have.”

“I ... I ... it wouldn’t be proper,” stammered Anthony.

The nightmare was getting worse. Why didn’t somebody have the sense to wake him up? Kiss *that* ... even without taking the dagger and the

murdered George into account! Was this how dreams came true?

“Who cares for propriety at our age?” asked Caroline, polishing her dagger on the tail of her nightdress. “Please don’t think this is *my* nightdress, Anthony. They had locked up all my clothes and I spilled some tea on the blue silk one I had on ... so I borrowed one of Mrs. Abe’s. Well, if you won’t kiss me ... you were always a stubborn little devil ... all the Fingolds were ... I’ll have to kiss you.”

She came across the sunroom and kissed him. Anthony staggered back. Was this how dreams came true? But he had the oddest sense of relief that the nightdress didn’t belong to Caroline.

“Stop staring, Anthony darling,” said Caroline. “Did Clara ever kiss you like that?”

No, thank God, she never had ... never would! Clara didn’t go about with daggers, kissing men.

“I must be getting home,” gasped Anthony, forgetting all about his promise to Abe.

He was filled with terror. Caroline Wilkes was out of her mind. *That* was what was the matter with her, not sinking spells. And she might become violent at any moment ... no doubt that was what her “spells” meant. Confound Abe Saunders! He’d get square with him yet. Abe must have known perfectly well what ailed her. And Dr. Blythe, too. Even Clara. They were all in the plot to have him murdered.

“And leave me alone in this big house with a murdered boy in my closet?” said Caroline, glaring at him and flourishing her dagger in his very face.

“*He* won’t hurt you if he is dead ... and you say you killed him yourself,” said Anthony, gathering courage from the extremity of fear.

“How do you know what dead people can or cannot do?” demanded Caroline. “Were *you* ever dead, Anthony Fingold?”

“No,” said Anthony, wondering how soon he might be.

“Then stop talking about something you know nothing of,” said Caroline. “You are not going home until Abe Saunders comes back. But you can go to bed if you want to. Yes, that will be the best plan, from every point of view. Clara won’t worry. She knows she can trust her little Anthony. Go to bed in the north gable.”

“I’d rather ... not ...” said Anthony feebly.

"I am accustomed to be obeyed," said Caroline, putting on the high and mighty manner she could always assume like a garment. How well he remembered it. It had gone admirably with silk dresses and marcelled hair and jewels ... but with dingy old flannel nightgowns! And daggers!

"Do you see this dagger?" continued Caroline, holding it up in a hand bonier than her ankles, if that were possible. Anthony thought of Clara's plump, pink, if somewhat work-worn hands.

"It is a poisoned dagger from Ned's collection," said Caroline. "One tiny prick and you are a dead man. I'll stick it into you if you don't go up to the north gable at once."

Anthony Fingold skipped up the stairs and into the north gable and stood not upon the order of his skipping. He only wanted to get a door shut between himself and Caroline. If there would only be a key in it! But to his horror she followed him and yanked open a bureau drawer.

"Here is a pair of my son's pyjamas," she said, tossing them into his arms. "Put them on and get into bed and sleep like a Christian. I'll look in presently to see if you've done as you're told. Clara has always given you too much of your own way. If you had married me you would have worn pyjamas from the start."

"How ... how did you hear about Clara wanting me to wear pyjamas?" stammered Anthony, his curiosity getting the better of his terror.

"I hear about everything," returned Caroline. "Get into bed now. Set to watch me, indeed! I'll show them. If there's any watching to be done *I'll* do it. I'm not a child yet."

Caroline took the key out of the door, to poor Anthony's deep disappointment.

"I suppose you know the earth is flat?" she said, lifting the dagger.

"Of course it is flat," agreed Anthony hastily.

"Perfectly flat?"

"P ... perfectly."

"What liars men are!" said Caroline. "There are hills on it."

She disappeared with a horrible soundless chuckle.

Anthony allowed himself a breath of relief as the door closed. He lost no time in getting into the pyjamas. Clara had been at him for years to wear pyjamas and had never prevailed. But then Clara did not go about

pointing poisoned daggers at you. Anthony felt that he had lived a hundred years since his casual visit to the Glen St. Mary store.

Anthony crawled in between the sheets and lay there quaking. What if Caroline took a notion to return to see if he had obeyed her? Was there a telephone in the house? No, he remembered there wasn't.

Oh, if he were only at home in his own bed and nightshirt, with the cat sleeping across his legs and a hot water bottle at his feet! Confound nurses who gadded and women who got their legs broken in car accidents and Georges who disappeared! Could she really have hung George in the closet? It sounded incredible ... but an insane person might do anything ... anything!

And what closet? Why, it might be the one of the room he was in! At the thought Anthony broke out in a cold perspiration.

What Caroline did do next was something the unhappy Anthony had never dreamed of. She came back, stalking in without anything so conventional as a rap. He heard her footsteps coming up the stairs and quivered with agony, drew the bedclothes up to his chin and peered at her in dismay.

She had put on a dress ... a rather handsome one of grey silk ... and a pair of shell-rimmed glasses. She had her teeth in but her head was bare, her hair still floated in elf-locks around her shoulders, and she still wore the old felt bedroom slippers she had worn on her first appearance. Likely Mrs. Abe's, too. *And* she still carried the dagger. Anthony gave himself up for lost.

He would never see Clara again ... never join in the local gossip in Carter Flagg's store of an evening ... never wear a nightshirt. But there was not so much comfort in *that* thought as he would have expected. Were shrouds so much better than pyjamas? He wished he had humoured Clara. It would have been something for her to remember when he was gone.

"Get up," said Caroline. "We are going for a drive."

Anthony broke into another cold perspiration.

"I ... I'd rather not ... it's too late ... and I'm very comfortable here."

"I said get up."

Caroline pointed with the dagger. Anthony got up. You had to humour them. What on earth had become of Abe? Or had that crazy old car of his broken down? He caught sight of himself in the mirror and had to admit

that pyjamas did look ... well, more manly than a nightshirt. Only he did not admire Norman's taste in colours.

"Never mind your clothes," said Caroline. "I'm in a hurry. Somebody may come home at any moment. I haven't had a chance like this for years."

"I ... I ... I can't go out in these things," stammered Anthony, gazing in horror at the violent orange and purple pyjamas.

"Why not? They cover you all up and that is more than can be said of a nightshirt. Can you fancy me, Caroline Wilkes, driving with a man in a nightshirt? Don't be a moron."

Anthony hadn't the least idea what a moron was but he did know that a poisoned dagger was a poisoned dagger.

Meekly he preceded Caroline down the stairs, out of the house, and across the lawn to the garage. The big Wilkes car was outside and Anthony, still at the dagger's point, got in.

"Now we'll step on the gas," said Caroline with a fiendish chuckle, as she laid the dagger on the seat beside her and took the wheel.

A faint hope came into Anthony's heart that he might at least get possession of the dagger. But Caroline seemed to have eyes all over her head.

"Leave that alone, little man," she said, "or I'll stick it clean through you. Do you think I am going to be left without a weapon of defence when driving with such a desperate character as you? Now rig-a-jig-jig and away we go! Oh, we'll have a merry drive. It is a long time since I had a chance to drive a car. And once I was the best driver in Montreal. Where would you like to go, little man?"

"I ... I think I'd better go home," chattered Anthony.

"Home! ... Nonsense! A body can go home when they can't go anywhere else. Clara won't be worried. She knows you too well, little man."

Yes, of course it was a nightmare. It couldn't be anything else. He couldn't be flying along the highway at nine o'clock at night in a car with Caroline Wilkes as a driver. Once such a thought would have seemed to him as unalloyed bliss! And Clara *would* be worried. Like all women she was in the habit of worrying over nothing. He had developed a sudden anxiety in regard to Clara's feelings.

“We’re ... we’re going rather fast, ain’t we?” said the poor buccaneer, wondering if anyone had ever died of sheer terror.

“Why, this is nothing to what I can do,” laughed the cheerful old ghoul beside him.

Then she proceeded to show what she could do. She spun off into a corkscrew side road on two wheels ... she went slap through the spruce hedge that was the pride of Nathan MacAllister’s heart ... she went through a wide brook and through a field of potatoes ... up a muddy, narrow lane ... through John Peterson’s backyard ... through another hedge ... and finally out to the highway, which, on this especial night, seemed crowded with traffic. There were really not many cars, though a considerable number of horses and buggies, but to poor Anthony’s eyes there seemed no room anywhere.

Finally they struck a cow who had imprudently ambled out of a side road. The animal promptly disappeared in the most unaccountable fashion. In truth she was only slightly grazed and hurried back to her side road. But Anthony thought she must have been scared into that “fourth dimension” he had heard Dr. Blythe and Dr. Parker joking about. Anthony hadn’t the slightest idea what the fourth dimension was but he had gathered that anyone or anything that went there was not seen again. Well, *he* would not be seen again but his dead body would ... clad in Norman’s pyjamas. And Tom Thaxter had always wanted Clara. Even in the horror of the moment Anthony felt for the first time a pang of jealousy in regard to Clara.

“We saved ten minutes by that shortcut,” Caroline was chortling. “Nothing like shortcuts ... I’ve taken them all my life. Got ten times more fun than most women. Now for a clear road to Charlottetown. We’ll teach these country bumpkins what joyriding really means. They haven’t the slightest idea, you know. Clara ever go joyriding?”

Anthony had been supported through that terrible “shortcut” by the conviction that somewhere or other he had heard or read that nothing ever happened to a lunatic.

But now he gave himself up for lost. Not even a lunatic could negotiate the night traffic on the Charlottetown highway at the rate that tiger-cat of a Caroline was going. On Saturday nights every boy in the country took his best girl to a show in town and everyone who boasted possession of a Ford was out showing off.

Besides, there were three railroad crossings.

His only remaining hope was that death might not be too terrible. The idea of dying in bed was no longer so unattractive as it had once seemed. Even if you were wearing pyjamas.

Then a dreadful thought occurred to Anthony. They would have to pass through Lowbridge. And hadn't he heard poor Clara say there was to be a community dance and street parade in Lowbridge that night?

She had spoken disapprovingly and ... Anthony had thought ... narrow-mindedly. It was the first thing of its kind that had ever been heard of in that part of the country ... but it sounded romantic.

Everybody in Lowbridge knew him, of course. And any number of Clara's relations lived there ... people who had never approved of Clara "taking" him.

Suppose they saw him ... tearing through the town in pyjamas with Caroline Wilkes! And of course they would see him. Everybody would be out.

"And me an elder in the church!" groaned Anthony.

He knew now how he had prized that eldership ... although he had affected to despise Clara's pride and Susan Baker's increased, though veiled, respect. What was an eldership to the heroes of his dreams?

But he knew now. And of course it would be taken from him. He didn't know how such things were done but of course there was a way. It wouldn't be the slightest use to point out that pyjamas were more respectable things than nightshirts to drive about with ladies in. Nobody would see the necessity of either.

Everybody would think he was drunk ... that was it, drunk. Jerry Cox had been fined ten dollars and costs for driving a car when drunk. Jim Flagg had to spend ten days in jail. Suppose he, Anthony Fingold, was sent to jail!

And what if Old Maid Bradley heard of this escapade ... as of course she would ... and wrote it up for that scoundrelly *Enterprise* of hers that hadn't six words of truth in it from one year's end to the other?

Poor, poor Clara! She would never lift her head again. And how Dr. Parker would roar! How Susan Baker would smile and say she had always expected it! How he would lose the respect of everybody! Welcome death! It would be far better than such a fate.

"I never thought the like of this would happen to me on this side of the grave," groaned Anthony. "I've never done anything very bad ... except in imagination. But I suppose you are punished for that." What was that sermon Mr. Meredith preached last year that everyone talked of? "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." By that rule, he, Anthony Fingold, was wicked beyond description.

Perhaps he deserved even this ... but it was very bitter.

"I wonder if they'll find the axe," said Caroline.

"What axe?" asked Anthony through chattering teeth.

"Why, you old fool, the one I chopped George up with. I dropped it under the loose boards in the back porch floor. I suppose you'll blazon that all over the country. Men can never hold their tongues."

"You told me you hung him in the closet," yelled Anthony, to whom, for some inexplicable reason, this change in George's fate seemed the last straw. "You couldn't have both hung him and chopped him up."

"Why not, little man? I hung him first ... then I cut him down and carved him up. You don't suppose I'd leave his body there to be found, do you? None of the men I've murdered have ever been found. Did you ever have the fun of murdering anyone, Anthony?"

"I never wanted to murder anyone," said Anthony rashly and falsely. "And I don't believe ... yes, you can stick the dagger in me if you like ... I'm not altogether a worm ... you carved George up."

"A Mallard can do anything," said Caroline superbly.

It seemed as if a Mallard could. Caroline flew along that highway at a terrible rate, cutting out, cutting in, and never dreaming of slowing down at curves. It might have been some small comfort to Anthony if he had known they were going so fast that no one they met or passed got the faintest idea what he was wearing. They only recognized the Wilkes car and cursed the driver thereof. Even Dr. Blythe told Anne when he got home that something really ought to be done about that Wilkes man. "He'll kill someone yet."

Anthony would have thought he could tell him who that someone would be. He was resigned. The sooner death came the better. Only he was sorry he could not tell Clara he repented having snubbed her so often in the matter of pyjamas.

Caroline's grey hair streamed behind her and her eyes blazed. A score of times Anthony closed his eyes in expectation of the inevitable collision and a score of times it did not take place. Perhaps there was some truth after all in the old belief that nothing ever happened to a lunatic. Surely Caroline would stop when they got to Charlottetown. A policeman ... but would Caroline pay any attention to a policeman?

And then, about a mile out of town, Caroline suddenly turned and shot down a side road.

"The car that has just turned in there is after no good," she deigned to explain. "I've been keeping my eye on it for some time."

To Anthony the car seemed like any other car. To be sure, it was going at an awful rate for a narrow side road full of S-bends. Even Caroline couldn't catch up with it, though she kept it in sight. On and on they went, twisting and turning until Anthony lost all sense of direction and all sense of time. To him it seemed that they must have been driving for hours. But they were in uninhabited country now, all scrub spruce. It must be blueberry barrens. In his despair Anthony looked back.

"We are being followed ourselves," he gasped. "Hadn't we better stop?"

"Why?" said Caroline. "We have as good a right to the road as anyone. Let them follow. I tell you, Anthony Fingold, I am going to catch those fellows ahead. They've been up to no good. Would they be driving at such a rate on this kind of a road if they weren't trying to get away from the police? Answer me that question if you have any brains. You used to have some at school. You could always beat me in arithmetic. You were in love with me then, you know ... and I was quite gone on you ... though I would have died rather than admit it. What fools we are when we are young, aren't we, Anthony?"

Caroline Mallard was calmly admitting to him that she had been "gone" on him when they went to school together ... when he had thought she was hardly aware of his existence ... and now the only word of her speech that made much impression on him was "police."

He looked at the car behind. He was sure the driver was in uniform. And no one but police or lunatics would be travelling at such a rate. The police were after him and Caroline. He did not know whether the thought was a comfort or a torture. And what would happen? Caroline, he felt sure, would not stop for a policeman or anything else. Oh, what a story for the

Enterprise! What a tale for the Glens! He would never dare to show his face in Carter Flagg's store again. As for Clara ... she might and probably would leave him. In Prince Edward Island people did not get divorces ... but they "separated." He was sure Clara's Aunt Ellen had "left" her husband.

"A-ha, we're gaining on them," said Caroline exultantly.

The car ahead had slowed down as they spun around a hairpin curve and saw it crossing a creek bridge ahead of them. It *had* slowed down a little and Anthony could see plainly, by the light of a moth-eaten old moon that was just rising above the horizon, that someone in it threw a bag over the railing of the bridge as they whirled across it. Perhaps the remains of the chopped-up George were in it. By this time Anthony had so nearly lost his own reason that any wild idea seemed plausible to him.

Caroline saw the bag go over, too. In her excitement she pushed heavily on the accelerator and Anthony's long-awaited catastrophe came. The Wilkes car banged into the decrepit old railing ... the railing gave way ... and they went over.

To the last day of his life Anthony Fingold firmly believed in the truth of the adage that no harm could befall a lunatic.

The big car was smashed to bits but he crawled out of the wreck unharmed, to find himself standing in the middle of a shallow, muddy, deep-banked stream. Caroline was already beside him. Behind them the third car had stopped at the edge of a cow path that led down to the brook. Two men and a woman were scrambling down it, one of them in a chauffeur's uniform which Anthony had mistaken and still mistook for a policeman's. All three, even the chauffeur, smelled to high heaven of what Clara would have called "grog."

"Now you'll catch it for kidnapping me," said Caroline. "You might have drowned me. And where did you get my son's pyjamas? You are a thief, that is what *you* are, Anthony Fingold. And look what you have done to my car!"

She came threateningly towards him with that infernal dagger still in her hand. Anthony quaked with terror. He caught up the first protective thing that came to hand ... a bag that was lying high and dry on the edge of a log ... a bag that rustled oddly as he struck blindly at Caroline's uplifted arm.

The poisoned dagger ... it was really an old paper cutter ... flew from her grasp and spun away into the darkness.

“Upon my word the little fellow has spunk after all,” said Caroline admiringly.

But Anthony did not see that long-desired admiration. Nor would he have cared if he had. It no longer mattered to him ... never would matter again ... what Caroline Wilkes thought of him.

He was scrambling up the opposite bank of the brook, still keeping an unconscious hold on the bag. They should not catch him ... he *would not* be arrested for kidnapping a crazy old woman who ought to be in an asylum.

As he disappeared in the shadows of the trees the other people gave their attention to Caroline Wilkes, whom they knew slightly, and took her home. She went meekly enough, her “spell” being over.

Poor Anthony had run for the best part of a mile before he realized that no one was pursuing him. Then he pulled up, quite out of breath, and gazed around him, hardly daring to believe his good fortune. For such it certainly seemed, after the horrors of the preceding hours.

He was in the blueberry barrens behind the Upper Glen. In all that wild racing and chasing along side roads they must have doubled back until he was within five miles of home. Home! Never had the word seemed so sweet to Anthony Fingold ... if, indeed, he still had a home! He had read of men spending what they thought was a few hours somewhere and finding that a hundred years had passed. He felt that it would not surprise him to find that a century had elapsed since he had gone to Carter Flagg’s store to get that liniment for Clara.

Beloved Clara! Worth a hundred Caroline Mallards. Of course he would get a scolding from her but he felt he deserved it. He wished he might appear before her clad in something else than Norman Wilkes’ pyjamas. But there were no houses in the barrens and he would not have had the spunk to call at them if there had been. Besides, the fewer times he had to tell the tale the better.

An hour later a weary, aching Anthony, still clad in wet orange and purple pyjamas, crept into his own kitchen. He was very tired. His heart might be as young as it used to be but he had discovered that his legs were not.

He had hoped that Clara would be asleep but Clara was not. The tasty little snack she had always left out for Anthony when he was out late was spread on the kitchen table but it was untouched. For the first time in their married life he found Clara ... calm, placid Clara ... on the verge of hysterics.

The story had reached her over the telephone that Anthony had been seen driving at a terrific rate with old Caroline Wilkes, who was not right in her head, as everybody knew. A distracted Abe Saunders had telephoned. A distracted George Mallard had called. Clara had practically spent the evening at the telephone, making or answering calls. Everybody at Ingleside seemed away, as she could get no answer from them, or she might have had some comfort. She had just decided to get the neighbours out searching when Anthony shambled in.

He did not know what she would say. He was prepared for a real scolding ... the first she had ever administered to him, he reflected. But anything she might say was well-deserved. He had never appreciated her.

Clara whirled from the telephone and said the last thing Anthony expected her to say ... did the last thing Anthony expected her to do. Clara, who never indulged in any outward display of feeling, suddenly broke into a fit of wild tears.

"That woman," she sobbed, "has been able to get you to wear pyjamas when I never could. And after all the years I've tried to be a good wife to you! Oh, such an evening as I have spent! Didn't you know she has been out of her head for years?"

"You never told me that!" cried Anthony.

"Tell you! I'd have died before I mentioned her name to you. I've always known it was her you wanted. But I thought someone else would. It's common knowledge. And now you've been spending the whole evening with her ... and come home in pyjamas ... I won't stand for it ... I'll get a divorce ... I'll ..."

"Clara, please listen to me," implored Anthony. "I'll tell you the whole story ... I swear every word of it is true. But let me get into some dry things first ... you don't want me to die of pneumonia, do you? Though I know I deserve it."

Beloved Clara! Never did any man have such a wife. She was worth a million of what he had believed Caroline Mallard to be. Without another

word she wiped her eyes, brought him a warm dressing gown, rubbed his sprained back, anointed his bruises, and made him a cup of hot tea. In short, she almost restored his self-respect.

Then he told her the whole story. And Clara believed every word of it. Would any other woman in the world have done so?

Finally, they thought of the bag, which was lying on the floor.

“Might as well see what’s in it,” said Clara, her own calm, composed self once more. Men were men and you couldn’t make them into anything else. And it really hadn’t been Anthony’s fault. Caroline Wilkes could always do as she liked with them. The old harridan.

When they saw what was in the bag they stared at each other in amazement, rather aghast.

“There ... there’s sixty thousand dollars if there is a cent,” gasped Anthony. “Clara, what are we to do?”

“Susan Baker phoned up from Ingleside just after you left that the Bank of Nova Scotia in Charlottetown had been robbed,” said Clara. “I guess the robbers thought you and Caroline were after them and they’d better get rid of their loot. They must have been out of ammunition. There’s a reward offered for the capture of the bandits or the recovery of the money. Maybe we’ll get it, Anthony. They couldn’t give it to the Wilkes gang. It was you who found and brought home the money. We’ll see what Dr. Blythe has to say about it.”

Anthony was too tired to feel excited over the prospect of a reward.

“It’s too late to phone anyone about it tonight,” he said. “I’ll bury it under the pile of potatoes in the cellar.”

“It’ll be safe enough locked up in the spare room closet,” said Clara. “And now the wisest thing for us to do is to go to bed. I’m sure you need a rest.”

Anthony stretched himself in bed until his still cold toes were cosy against the hot-water bottle. Beside him was a rosy, comely Clara, in the crimpers he had often despised but which were certainly a thousandfold more beautiful than Caroline Wilkes’ elf-locks.

The very next day he would start making that herbaceous border she had wanted so long ... she deserved it if ever a woman did. And he had seen some blue-and-white striped flannel in Carter Flagg’s store that would make very tasty pyjamas. Yes, Clara was a jewel among women. She had

never turned a hair over some parts of that wild yarn of his which any woman might have been excused for disbelieving.

He supposed the Wilkes gang would send his clothes home. Of course it would get out everywhere that he had been seen joyriding with old Caroline in pyjamas. But there were some humiliating things no one would ever know. He could trust his Clara. If Caroline Wilkes told anyone she kissed him no one would believe her. The rest didn't matter so much, although Anthony could hardly repress a groan when he thought of what Old Maid Bradley would say of it. She would write it up for what she called her "syndicate" ... no doubt of that. Well, there would be a few humiliating weeks and then people would forget it. And the reward the bank offered might ease them up. He might even be thought a hero instead of a ... well, a dod-gasted fool.

"But no more adventures for me," thought Anthony Fingold as he drifted into sleep. "Enough's enough. I was never really in love with Caroline Mallard. It was just a case of calf love. Clara has really been the only woman in my life."

He honestly believed it. And perhaps it was true.

The Sixth Evening

FAREWELL TO AN OLD ROOM

*In the gold of sunset bloom
I must leave my old, old room,
Bid good-bye and shut the door
Never to repass it more.
Tender things my lips would say
To it as I go away,
For this room has seemed to be
In itself a friend to me.*

*Here I knew how sweet was sleep ...
Sweeter still to lie in deep
Wakefulness of joy that came
Touched with youth's enchanted flame.
Lovely laughter has been here
Moonlit dreaming, very dear,
And the waking rapture when
Morn came dancing up the glen.*

*Here I sought to make me fair,
Looped and coaxed and bound my hair,
Slipped the sheen of kissing silk
Over shoulders white as milk,
Loved myself because I knew
Seeing, he would love me, too.*

*Waited at this window ... so ...
For a hurrying step below.*

*Here have I aforetime lain
Cheek to cheek with biting pain,
Death came here one shuddering day,
Looked on me but went away;
Good and evil, rest and strife,
All the wonderment of life,
All its lavish pageantry
Have been here a part of me.*

*So I say good-bye with tears
To my room of happy years,
And if she who comes to stay
Here when I have gone away
Be a girl I leave her, too,
All the fairy dreams I knew,
All my fancies, all the hosts
Of my little friendly ghosts.*

*May she have as I have had
Many things to make her glad,
Beckoning sunshine, singing showers,
Long, serene, contented hours,
Muted wind in boughs of fir,
Nights that will be kind to her,
And a room that still will be
Friend as it has been to me.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “It isn’t hard to guess the inspiration of that poem,
Anne. Your old room at Green Gables?”

ANNE:- “Yes, mostly. I thought it out the night before our wedding
day. And I felt every word of it. That room was the first I ever

had of my own in my life.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “But you *did* repress it often.”

ANNE, *dreamily*:- “No, never. I was a wife, not a girl when I went back. And it was a friend to me ... you can’t guess what a friend.”

DR. BLYTHE, *teasingly*:- “Did you ever think of me in your ‘wakefulness of joy’?”

ANNE:- “Perhaps. And when I got up early to see the sun rise over the Haunted Wood.”

WALTER:- “I love to see it rise over Rainbow Valley.”

JEM:- “I didn’t think you ever got up early enough for that!”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Did you really ‘dress up’ for me?”

ANNE:- “After we were engaged of course I did. I wanted you to think me as pretty as possible. And even in our schooldays when we were such enemies I think I wanted you to see me looking as nice as could be.”

JEM:- “Do you mean to say, mums, that you and dad were on bad terms when you went to school?”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Your mother thought she had a grudge against me, but I always wanted to be friends. However, that is all ancient history now. When did death come and look at you?”

ANNE:- “Not my death. It was the shadow of your death I was thinking of ... when everybody thought you were dying of typhoid. I thought I would die, too. And the night after I had heard you had taken a turn for the better ... ah, that was the ‘wakefulness of joy’!”

DR. BLYTHE:- “It couldn’t have been anything to mine the night after I found you loved me!”

JEM, *aside to Nan*:- “When dad and mums get to talking like that we find out a lot about their early days we never knew.”

SUSAN, *who is making pies in the kitchen*:- “Isn’t it beautiful to see how they love each other? I can understand a good deal of that poem, old maid as I am.”

THE HAUNTED ROOM

*The old clock ticks behind the door,
The shadows lurk and chase,
The driftwood firewood makes the room
A homely, pleasant place.
A haven from the hungry wind,
A shelter from the sea,
But in this twilight silence it
Is full of ghosts for me.*

*Here Dorothea dances yet,
That dark and vivid girl,
Though many a year the graveyard dust
Has shrouded cheek and curl.
Here Allan tells a tale of love
That brings its olden thrill,
Though Allan's lips are mute and cold,
And Allan's heart is still.*

*Here Will's wild strains of music yet
In witching cadence fall,
Though Will's old fiddle long untouched
Hangs soundless on the wall.
Edith and Howard, Jen and Joe,
They come, a friendly host,
I hear their laughter and their jests ...
Even laughter has its ghost.*

*Pulsating joys and starry hopes,
Unshadowed by regrets,
Surround me like the fragrance of
Wind-shaken violets,*

*And out of all that come and go
Is one I cannot miss ...
The faded little spectre of
One unforgotten kiss.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “One unforgotten kiss! One of Roy Gardiner’s, I presume?”

ANNE, *indignantly*:- “Roy never kissed me. And most of the poem is pure imagination.”

SUSAN:- “Oh, do not be talking of kisses before the children, Mrs. Dr. dear ... begging your pardon for interfering.”

JEM, *aside to Diana*:- “Listen to her! As if we had never seen or heard of a kiss!”

DIANA, *teasingly*:- “You, anyhow. I saw you kissing Faith Meredith in school last week ... and Mary Vance, too.”

JEM:- “For mercy’s sake, don’t let Susan hear you say that. She might forgive it with Faith but never with Mary Vance.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Do you know, Anne, there’s an old fiddle hanging on the wall of a parlour in the Upper Glen. It never seems to be taken down. I’ve often wondered what its story is, if it has one.”

ANNE:- “You may be sure it has. You can’t write *anything*, Gilbert, but it touches a chord somewhere.”

SUSAN, *to herself*:- “I could tell them the story of that fiddle if I liked. But I won’t. It’s too sad.”

SONG OF WINTER

*Fast tonight the frost is holding over all the world we know,
Fields we love are grim and barren underneath the woven snow,
And our forest, palled in purple, seems far less a friend than foe.*

*But at twilight we foregather by the red and purring flame,
Springtime long ago forsaken, summer but a golden name,
By the hearth as in the woodland comradeship remains the same.*

*Gone the violet of the valley, gone the rose and daffodil,
Song has left our hills of roaming very lonely, very chill,
Secret glens have ceased to call us and our river's voice is still.*

*But our shabby books are with us and our dreams are never o'er,
On the gleam of stark midwinter we will shut our sturdy door,
At our own fireside the love light burns and beckons evermore.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- "The old, old love light that was kindled so many years ago in Avonlea ... and burns yet, Anne ... at least for me."

ANNE:- "And for me, too. And will burn forever, Gilbert." dr.

blythe:- "There is something about that poem of yours I especially like, Anne."

SUSAN, *to herself*:- "And me, too. It is well to have a roof over your head and a warm fire to snuggle by on a night like this."

Penelope Struts Her Theories

Penelope Craig went home early from Mrs. Elston's bridge. She had the notes to prepare for her lecture on Child Psychology that evening and there were several pressing problems demanding her attention ... especially the drafting of a child's diet with the proper number of vitamins in it. The other ladies were sorry to see her go, for Penelope was popular with her friends, but that did not prevent them from laughing a little after she had gone.

"The idea," said Mrs. Collins, "of Penelope Craig adopting a child."

"But why not?" asked Mrs. Dr. Blythe, who was visiting friends in town. "Isn't she a recognized authority on child training?"

"Oh, yes, of course. And she is also president of our S.P.C.A., and convenor of our child welfare committee and lecturer under the National Association of Women's Clubs; and in spite of it all, she's the sweetest thing that ever breathed. But *still* I say ... the idea of her adopting a child."

"But why?" said the persistent Mrs. Blythe, who had once been an adopted child herself and knew that people thought Marilla Cuthbert at old Green Gables stark crazy for taking her.

"Why!" Mrs. Collins threw out her hands expressively. "If you had known Penelope Craig as long as we have, Mrs. Blythe, you'd understand. She is full of theories but when it comes to putting them into practice ... and with a boy at that!"

Anne remembered that the Cuthberts had sent for a boy in the first place. She found herself wondering how Marilla would have got along with a boy.

"She *might* manage a girl ... after all, there's probably something in all those theories and it's easier to experiment with girls," continued Mrs.

Collins. "But a boy! *Just* fancy Penelope Craig bringing up a boy!"

"How old is he?" asked Anne.

"About eight, I'm told. He's really no relation to Penelope ... he's merely the son of an old school friend of hers who died recently. His father died soon after he was born and the boy never had any contacts with men, so Penelope says."

"Which is an advantage in her eyes, of course," laughed Mrs. Crosby.

"Does Miss Craig dislike men?" It was Mrs. Blythe again.

"Oh, I wouldn't go as far as to say she dislikes them ... no, not actually dislikes them. I would rather put it that she can't be bothered with them. Dr. Galbraith could tell you that. Poor Dr. Galbraith! I suppose your husband knows him."

"I think I've heard him speak of him. He's very clever, isn't he? And is he in love with Miss Craig?"

What an outspoken person this Mrs. Blythe was! On her part she was thinking how hard it was to find out simple things. People took it so for granted that you must know all they did.

"I should say so. He's been proposing to Penelope off and on for ... it must be ten years or so. Let me see ... yes, it's thirteen years since his wife died."

"He must be a very persistent man," smiled Mrs. Blythe.

"I should say so. The Galbraiths never give up. And Penelope just goes on refusing him so sweetly that he's sure she'll relent the next time."

"And don't you suppose she will ... sometime?" Mrs. Blythe smiled, recalling some incidents of her own romance.

"I don't think there's a chance. Penelope will never marry ... Roger Galbraith or anybody else."

"Roger Galbraith," thought Anne. "Yes, that is the man. I remember Gilbert saying that when he set his mind on anything there was no moving it."

"They are the best of friends," said Mrs. Loree. "And friends they will remain ... nothing more."

"Sometimes you find out that what you thought was friendship is really love," said Mrs. Blythe. "She's very handsome" ... recalling Miss Craig's beautiful blue-black hair in little dark curls around her wide, low, cream-

white brow. Anne had never grown really reconciled to her own ruddy tresses.

“Handsome and clever and competent,” agreed Mrs. Collins. “*Too* clever and competent. That is why she has no patience with men.”

“I suppose she thinks she doesn’t need them,” smiled Anne.

“Likely that is the reason. But I confess it annoys me to see a man like Roger Galbraith dangling after her for ten years when there is any number of lovely girls he could get. Why, half the unmarried women in Charlottetown would jump at him.”

“How old is Miss Craig?”

“Thirty-five ... though she doesn’t look it, does she? She has never had a worry in her life ... or any sorrow, for her mother died when she was born. Since then she has lived in that apartment with old Marta ... a third or fourth cousin or something like that. Marta worships her and she devotes her time to club work of all kinds. Oh, she’s clever and competent, as I’ve said, but she’s going to find that bringing up a child in practice is a very different thing from bringing it up in theory.”

“Oh, theories!” Mrs. Tweed laughed, as the successful mother of six children felt she had to. “Penelope has theories in abundance. Do you remember that talk she gave us last year on ‘patterns’ in child training?”

Anne recalled Marilla and Mrs. Lynde. What would they have said to such talk?

“One point she stressed,” continued Mrs. Tweed, “was that children should be trained to go ahead and take the consequences. They shouldn’t be forbidden to do anything. ‘I believe in letting children find out things for themselves,’ she said.”

“Up to a point she’s right,” said Mrs. Blythe. “But when that point is reached ...”

“She said that children should be allowed to express their individuality,” said Mrs. Parker reminiscently.

“Most of them do,” laughed Mrs. Blythe. “Does Miss Craig *like* children? It seems to me that that is a very important point.”

“I asked her that once,” said Mrs. Collins, “and all she said was, ‘My dear Nora, why don’t you ask me if I like grown-up people?’ Now, what do you make out of that?”

“Well, she was right,” said Mrs. Fulton. “Some children are likeable and some aren’t.”

A memory of Josie Pye drifted across Anne’s mind.

“We all know that,” she said, “in spite of sentimental piffle.”

“*Could* anybody like that fat, dribbly Paxton child?” demanded Mrs. MacKenzie.

“His mother probably thinks him the most beautiful thing on earth,” said Anne, smiling.

“You wouldn’t say that if you knew the whalings she gives him,” said Mrs. Lawrence bluntly. “*She* doesn’t believe in sparing the rod and spoiling the child.”

“I’ve lived on buttermilk for five weeks and I’ve gained four pounds,” said Mrs. Williams bitterly. She thought it was time the subject was changed. After all, Mrs. Blythe was a B.A. even if she did live in some out-of-the-way place in the country.

But the others ignored her. Who cared if Mrs. Williams were fat or lean? What was diet to the fact of Penelope Craig adopting a boy?

“I’ve heard her say no child should ever be whipped,” said Mrs. Rennie.

“She and Susan would find themselves kindred spirits,” thought Anne amusedly.

“I agree with her there,” said Mrs. Fulton.

“H’m!” Mrs. Tweed pursed her lips. “Five of my children I never whipped. But Johnny ... I found a sound spanking about once in so long was necessary if we were to live with him. What do you think about it, Mrs. Blythe?”

Anne, recalling Anthony Pye, was spared the embarrassment of a reply by Mrs. Gaynor, who had hitherto said not a word and thought it high time she asserted herself.

“Fancy Penelope Craig spanking a child,” she said.

Nobody could fancy it so they returned to their game.

“Roger Galbraith will never get Penelope Craig,” said Dr. Blythe at Ingleside that evening, when Anne told him about the conversation. “And it’s the better luck for him. She is one of these strong-minded women no man really cares for.”

“I have a feeling in my bones,” said Anne, “that he will win her yet.”

“The wind is in the east,” said Gilbert. “That is what is the matter with your bones. And thank goodness this is a matter you can’t meddle in, you inveterate matchmaker.”

“That is no way for a man to talk to his wife,” thought Susan Baker, the Ingleside maid-of-all-work, indignantly. “I have long since given up hopes of marriage but if I were married my husband should at least refer to my bones respectfully. No one could think more highly of Dr. Blythe than I do but there are times when, if I were Mrs. Blythe, I should deem it my duty to administer a snub. Women should not put up with everything and that I will tie to.”

Dr. Roger Galbraith was in Penelope’s living room when she reached home, and Marta, who adored him, was giving him tea, with some of her big fat doughnuts.

“What’s this I hear about your adopting a boy, Penny? All the town seems to be talking about it.”

“I have begged her not to adopt a *boy*,” said Marta, in a tone which implied she had done it on her knees.

“I did not happen to have any choice in the matter of sex,” retorted Penelope, in her soft, lovely voice, which made even impatience seem charming. “Poor Ella’s child could not be left to the care of strangers. She wrote to me on her deathbed. I regard it as a sacred trust ... though I *am* sorry he is not a girl.”

“Do you think this is any place to bring up a boy?” said Dr. Galbraith, looking around the dainty little room and running his fingers dubiously through his mop of tawny hair.

“Of course not, Mr. Medicine-man,” said Penelope coolly. “I realize quite as clearly as you do how very important the background of a child’s life is. So I have bought a storybook cottage over at Keppoch ... I mean to call it Willow Run. It’s a delightful spot. Even Marta admits that.”

“Plenty of skunks, I suppose,” said Dr. Galbraith. “And mosquitoes.”

“There is a large summer colony of boarders there,” said Penelope, ignoring his reference to skunks. “Lionel will have plenty of companions. And there are some drawbacks to every place. But I think it is as nearly an ideal place for children as can be found. Plenty of sunshine and fresh air ... room to play ... room to develop individuality ... a sleeping porch for Lionel looking out on a hill of spruce ...”

“For whom?”

“Lionel. Yes, of course it is an absurd name. But Ella was rather given to romance.”

“He’ll be a regular sissy with such a name. But he’d be that anyway, pampered and petted by a widowed mother,” said Dr. Galbraith, getting up. His six feet of lean muscle did seem far too big for the little room. “Will you take me out and let me see this Willow Run of yours? What is the sanitation like?”

“Excellent. Did you suppose I would overlook that?”

“And the water? You get it from a well, I suppose? There was a lot of typhoid at Keppoch one summer a few years ago.”

“I’m sure it’s all right now. Perhaps you’d better come out and look it over.”

Penelope was slightly meeker. She knew all about bringing up those glad, simple little creatures, children, but typhoid was a different matter ... for this was before the days of its comparative conquest. A doctor was not without his legitimate uses.

Dr. Galbraith came along in his car the next afternoon and they went out to Willow Run.

“I met a Mrs. Blythe at Mrs. Elston’s yesterday,” said Penelope. “Her husband is a doctor, I believe. Do you know him?”

“Gilbert Blythe? Of course I do. One of the best. And his wife is a most charming person.”

“Oh ... well, I didn’t see much of her, of course,” said Penelope, wondering why Dr. Galbraith’s evident approval of Mrs. Blythe rather grated on her. As if it mattered a pin’s worth! But then she had never fancied red-haired women.

Dr. Galbraith approved the well and almost everything else about Willow Run. It was impossible to deny that it was charming. Penelope was nobody’s fool when it came to buying a place. There was a quaint, old, roomy house, surrounded by maples and willows, with a rose-trellis entrance to the garden and a stone walk, bordered with white quahog shells where daffodils bloomed all the spring. Now and then a break in the trees gave a glimpse of the blue bay. There was a white gate in the red brick wall surrounding it, with blooming apple trees branching over it.

“Almost as beautiful as Ingleside,” said Dr. Galbraith.

“Ingleside?”

“That is what the Blythes call their place out at Glen St. Mary. I like the fashion of giving names to places. It seems to confer an individuality on them.”

“Oh!” Again Penelope’s voice seemed a trifle cold. She seemed to be running up against those Blythes at every moment now. And she did not believe that this what-do-you-call-it ... Ingel-something ... could be as beautiful as Willow Run.

The interior of the house was equally charming.

“It should develop the right sort of attitude in Lionel, I think,” said Penelope complacently. “A child’s attitude towards his home is very important. I want Lionel to love his home. I am glad the dining room looks out on the delphinium walk. Fancy sitting and eating and gazing out at delphiniums.”

“Perhaps a boy would rather look at something else ... though Walter Blythe ...”

“Look at these squirrels,” said Penelope hastily. For some unknown reason she felt she would scream if Dr. Galbraith mentioned any of the Blythes again. “They are quite tame. Surely a boy would like squirrels.”

“You can never tell what they’ll like. But it is probable he will if it is only as something to set the cat chasing.”

“I shall not have a cat. I don’t like them ... I can hardly wait to move out. I can’t imagine how I could have existed so long cooped up in that apartment. And now with Willow Run and a child of my own ...”

“Don’t forget he isn’t really a child of your own, Penny. And if he were there would be problems, too.”

Dr. Galbraith looked up at her as she stood on the step above him. His good-natured, black-grey eyes had suddenly grown very tender.

“It’s such a glorious day, Penny, that I can’t help proposing to you again,” he said lightly. “You needn’t refuse me unless you want to.”

Penelope’s lips curled at the corners, a bit mockingly but kindly.

“I could like you so much, if you didn’t want me to love you, Roger. Our friendship is so pleasant ... why will you persist in trying to spoil it? Once for all, there is no place for men in my life.” Then, for no reason she could ever give, even to herself, she added,

“It’s such a pity Mrs. Blythe isn’t a widow.”

“I shouldn’t have thought *you* capable of saying such a thing, Penny,” said Roger quietly. “If Mrs. Blythe were a widow it wouldn’t matter a sixpence to me in *that* way. I’ve never cared for red-haired women.”

“Mrs. Blythe’s hair isn’t red ... it’s a most charming auburn,” protested Penelope, suddenly feeling that Mrs. Blythe was a delightful creature.

“Well, call it any shade you like, Penny.” Dr. Galbraith’s tone was several degrees lighter. He believed that Penny had really felt jealous of Mrs. Blythe ... and where there is jealousy there is hope. But he was more silent than usual on the way back, while Penelope discoursed blithely about the child mind, the wisdom of letting a child do what he wanted to do ... “exhibiting his ego,” she summed it up ... and the importance of seeing that he ate enough spinach.

“Mrs. Blythe has given up trying to make Jem eat spinach,” said the doctor on purpose.

But Penelope no longer cared what Mrs. Blythe did or didn’t do. She condescended, however, to ask the doctor what he thought about the power of suggestion ... especially when a child was asleep.

“If a child was asleep I’d let him sleep. Most mothers are only too glad when a child does go to sleep.”

“Oh, most mothers! I don’t mean for you to wake him up, of course. You just sit beside him and very quietly and calmly suggest what you want to impress on his mind in a low, controlled tone.”

“I don’t,” said Dr. Galbraith.

Penelope could have bitten her tongue out. How could she have forgotten that Roger’s wife had died in childbirth?

“There may be something in it,” said Dr. Galbraith, who had once remarked rather cynically to Dr. Blythe that the secret of any success he might have had was due to the fact that he always advised people to do what he knew they really wanted to do.

“It will be wonderful to watch his little mind develop,” said Penelope dreamily.

“He’s eight, so you tell me,” said Dr. Galbraith dryly. “Probably his mind has already developed to a considerable extent. You know what the Roman Catholic Church says of a child ... the first seven years, etc. However, it is never forbidden to hope.”

“You lose so much out of life by being cynical, Roger,” rebuked Penelope gently.

Though Penelope would not have admitted it, even to herself, she was glad that Dr. Galbraith was away when Lionel came. He had gone for a vacation and would be gone several weeks. Long before he came back she would have been used to Lionel and all the problems would have been worked out. For of course there would be problems ... Penelope did not blink at that. But she was quite sure that, given patience and understanding, both of which she felt she possessed in abundance, they would be easily solved.

The first sight of Lionel, when she went to the station in the early morning, to take him over from the man who had brought him from Winnipeg, was a bit of a shock. She had somehow been expecting to see Ella’s golden curls and baby-blue eyes and willowy grace in miniature. Lionel must look like the father she had never seen. He was short and stocky, with thick black hair and unchildishly thick black eyebrows, almost meeting across his nose. His eyes were black and smouldering, and his mouth was set in an obstinate line which broke into no smile at her affectionate greeting.

“I am your Aunt Penelope, darling.”

“No, you ain’t,” said Lionel. “We ain’t no relation.”

“Well ...” Penelope was slightly taken aback ... “not really an aunt, of course, but won’t it be nicer to call me that? I was your mother’s dearest friend. Did you have a nice trip, dear?”

“Nope,” said Lionel.

He got into the runabout beside her and looked neither to the right nor to the left on the road to Willow Run.

“Are you tired, dear?”

“Nope.”

“Hungry, then? Marta will ...”

“I ain’t hungry.”

Penelope gave it up. There was a good deal in child psychology about letting children alone. She would let Lionel alone since he evidently did not want to talk. They covered the distance in silence but Lionel broke it

just as Penelope brought her car to a halt before the door where Marta was waiting.

“Who is that ugly old woman?” he asked distinctly.

“Why ... why ... that’s Marta, my cousin who lives with me. You can call her Auntie, too. You’ll like her when you know her.”

“I won’t,” said Lionel.

“And you mustn’t ...” Penelope remembered just in time that you must never say “must not” to children. It does something dreadful to their ego ... “please don’t call her ugly.”

“Why not?” asked Lionel.

“Why ... why ... oh, because you don’t want to hurt her feelings, do you? Nobody likes to be called ugly, you know, darling. *You* wouldn’t, would you?”

“But I ain’t ugly,” said Lionel.

This was true enough. In his own way he was rather a handsome child.

Marta came forward grimly and held out her hand. Lionel put his hand behind his back.

“Shake hands with Aunt Marta, darling.”

“Nope,” said Lionel, and added, “She ain’t my aunt.”

Penelope felt something she had never felt before in her life ... a desire to shake somebody. It was so important that he should make a good impression on Marta. But just in time she remembered her patterns.

“Let us have some breakfast, dear,” she said brightly. “We’ll all feel better afterwards.”

“I ain’t sick,” said Lionel ... and added, “I ain’t going to be called ‘dear.’”

There was orange juice and a coddled egg for Lionel. He looked at it with aversion.

“Gimme some sausages,” he said.

As there were no sausages Lionel couldn’t have any. That being the case he would not have anything else. Penelope again decided to leave him alone ... “A little wholesome neglect sometimes does a child good,” she said, remembering her books on the bringing up of children. But when lunch hour came and Lionel still demanded sausages a dreadful feeling of helplessness crept over her. Lionel had spent the entire morning sitting on the front porch staring straight ahead of him. Since Dr. Galbraith’s

departure she had paid a visit to Ingleside at Glen St. Mary, and she could not help recalling the different behaviour of the Ingleside youngsters.

After lunch ... Lionel still stubbornly refused to eat anything because there were still no sausages ... he went back to the steps.

"I suppose he has no appetite," said Penelope anxiously. "I wonder if he needs a pill."

"He doesn't need a pill. What he needs ... and needs bad ... is a good spanking," said Marta. Her expression indicated that she would enjoy being the spanker.

Had it come to this so soon? Lionel had been at Willow Run only six hours and Marta was calling for spankings. Penelope lifted her head proudly.

"Do you suppose, Marta, I could ever spank poor Ella's child?"

"I'd attend to it for you," said Marta with an undoubted relish.

"Nonsense. The poor child is likely very tired and homesick. When he gets adjusted he will eat what he should. We'll just stick to our policy of leaving him alone, Marta."

"Best thing to do, since you won't spank him," agreed Marta. "He's a stubborn one ... I saw that the first moment I laid eyes on him. Will I order some sausages for his dinner?"

Penelope would not dip her colours.

"No," she said shortly. "Sausages are most unwholesome for children."

"I et plenty of them when I was a child," said Marta shortly, "and they never did me any harm."

Lionel, who had probably not slept very well on the train, fell asleep on the steps so soundly that he did not waken when Penelope lifted him in unaccustomed arms and carried him to a couch in the sunroom. His face was rosy and in sleep looked childlike. His close-shut lips had parted and Penelope saw that one front tooth was missing. After all, he was only a little fellow.

"He must be five pounds overweight," she thought anxiously. "I daresay it won't do him a bit of harm to go without food for a little while. He's very different from what I expected him to be ... but in spite of everything there is something attractive about him. Poor Ella didn't know anything about child psychology ... I suppose she never really found the right approach to him."

For dinner there was a delicious roasted chicken, with spinach for Lionel, and ice cream for dessert.

“Sausages,” said Lionel.

Penelope was in despair. It was all very well to say let a child alone ... let him learn for himself the consequences of certain acts ... but you couldn't let him starve to death. That might be learning consequences too late.

“I'll ... there'll be some sausages for your breakfast, darling. Try a bit of this nice chicken.”

“Sausages,” said Lionel. “And my name ain't darling. The boys at home called me Bumps.”

Marta went out and brought in a platterful of sausages, with a defiant glance at Penelope.

“I got 'em just to be on the safe side,” she said. “My cousin's wife, Mary Peters, out at Mowbray Narrows, made them. They're of good clean pork. You couldn't let him go with an empty stomach all night. He might come down sick.”

Lionel fell to on the sausages and ate every one of them. He accepted a helping of peas but said “Nope” to the spinach.

“I'll give you a nickel if you'll eat your spinach,” said Marta, to Penelope's horror. Bribing a child to do right!

“Make it a dime,” said Lionel.

He got the dime and he ate the spinach ... every scrap of it. At least Lionel believed in fulfilling his part of the contract. He did very well by his ice cream but reverted to sulks when Penelope refused to give him coffee.

“I've always had coffee,” he said.

“Coffee is not good for little boys, darling,” she said, and stuck to it. But she did not enjoy her own. Especially as Lionel said,

“You must be awful old. You can't seem to remember that my name isn't darling.”

Penelope never forgot those first two weeks of Lionel's existence at Willow Run. By dint of giving him some bacon with his egg he was induced to refrain from demanding sausages, and, apart from that, his appetite seemed normal enough. He even ate his spinach without bribes, apparently to save argument. But the problem of his meals being partially

solved there remained the problem of amusing him. For it had come to that. He would not make friends with any of the neighbouring youngsters and he sat on the porch steps and stared into vacancy or wandered idly around the grounds of Willow Run. Penelope took him out to Ingleside one day and he seemed to hit it off with Jem Blythe, whom he called a “good bean,” but you couldn’t go to Ingleside every day. He never looked at the squirrels and the swing which Penelope had erected for him in the backyard he disdained. He would not talk. He would not play with the mechanical donkey or the electric train or the toy airplane she bought him. Only once he threw a stone. Unluckily he picked the exact time when Mrs. Raynor, the wife of the Anglican minister, was coming in at the gate. It just missed her nose by an inch.

“You mustn’t throw stones at people, dar ... Lionel,” said Penelope miserably (forgetting that you “mustn’t” use “mustn’t”) after a very stately lady had gone.

“I didn’t throw it at her,” said Lionel dourly. “I just threw it. It wasn’t my fault she was there.”

Penelope took to going into the sleeping porch every night ... Lionel refused to sleep anywhere else ... and “suggesting.” Marta thought it was some kind of witchcraft. Penelope “suggested” that Lionel should feel happy ... should not want sausages or coffee ... should like spinach ... should realize they loved him ...

“Old Marta doesn’t,” said Lionel one night suddenly, when she had supposed him sound asleep.

“He won’t *let* us love him,” said Penelope despairingly. “And as for letting him do what he wants to do, he doesn’t want to do *anything*. He doesn’t want to go driving ... he won’t play with his toys ... and he doesn’t laugh enough. He doesn’t laugh *at all*, Marta. Do you notice that?”

“Well, some kids don’t,” said Marta. “What that kind want is a man to bring them up. They don’t take to women.”

Penelope disdained to reply. But it was after this that she suggested a dog. She had always rather hankered for a dog herself but her father had not liked dogs. Neither did Marta and an apartment was really no place for a dog. Surely Lionel would like a dog ... a boy should have a dog.

“I’m going to get you a dog, dar ... Lionel.”

She hoped to see Lionel's face light up for once. But he only looked at her out of lacklustre black eyes.

"A dog? Who wants a dog?" he said sulkily.

"I thought all boys liked dogs," faltered Penelope.

"I don't. A dog bit me once. I'd like a kitten," said Lionel. "They have heaps of kittens at Ingleside."

Neither Penelope nor Marta liked cats but this was the first thing Lionel had wanted apart from sausages. Penelope was afraid it would not do to thwart him.

"If you thwart a child you don't know what kind of a fixation you may set up," she remembered.

The kitten was procured ... Mrs. Blythe sent one in from Ingleside and Lionel announced that he would call it George.

"But, dar ... Lionel, it's a lady kitten," faltered Penelope. "Susan Baker told me so. Better call it Fluffy ... its fur is so soft ... or Topsy ..."

"Its name is George," said Lionel.

Lionel kept George by him and took her to bed with him ... much to Penelope's horror ... but he still prowled darkly about Willow Run and refused to enjoy himself. They had got used to his silence ... evidently he was a taciturn child by nature ... but Penelope could not get used to his smouldering discontent. She felt it to the marrow of her bones. Suggestion seemed of no avail. Ella's child was not happy. She had tried everything. She had tried amusing him ... she had tried leaving him alone.

"When he begins to go to school it will be better," she told Marta hopefully. "He will mingle with other boys then and have playmates. He seemed quite different that day we spent at Ingleside."

"The doctor and Mrs. Blythe have no theories, I'm told," said Marta.

"They must have some. Their children are very well behaved ... I admit that. I'd have had some boys in before but the children hereabouts have some kind of spots ... I don't know if it's catching ... but I thought it best not to expose Lionel to it. I ... I wish Roger were back."

"There are plenty other doctors in town," said Marta. "And you can't keep a child wrapped up in cotton wool all his life. I may be an old maid but I know *that*. Anyhow, it's two months yet till school opens."

Marta was taking things easily. Marta rather approved of Lionel, in spite of his calling her an ugly old woman.

He didn't get into mischief and he didn't say impolite things to you if you left him alone. He had to be bribed to drink his nightly glass of milk sometimes ... Marta did that oftener than Penelope had any idea of ... but he hoarded the dimes he got.

Once he asked Marta how much a ticket to Winnipeg cost and would not eat any lunch after he had been told. That night he told Marta he was "through with guzzling milk."

"I ain't a baby," he said.

"What will your Aunt Penelope say?" admonished Marta.

"Do you think I care?" said Lionel.

"You ought to care. She is very good to you," said Marta.

Penelope came to a certain decision on the day Lionel came in with a bad bruise on his knee. Not that he made any fuss over it but when he was asked how he got hurt he said the church steeple fell on him.

"Oh, but Lionel, that isn't true," said Penelope, horrified. "You couldn't expect us to believe that."

"I know it ain't true. When Walter Blythe says things that ain't true his mother calls it imagination."

"But there is a difference. He doesn't expect her to believe them true."

"I didn't expect you to either," said Lionel. "But nothing ever happens here. You've just got to pretend things happen."

Penelope gave up the argument. She bathed and disinfected the knee. She was conscious as she did so of a queer desire to kiss it. It was such an adorable, fat, little brown knee. But she was afraid if she did it Lionel would look at her with that fine trickle of disdain which sometimes appeared so disconcertingly in his expression.

He refused to let her put a bandage on it although Penelope felt sure it should be done to prevent possible infection.

"I'll rub some toad spit on it," said Lionel.

"Where did you ever hear of such a thing?" exclaimed Penelope in horror.

"Jem Blythe told me. But he wouldn't tell his father," added Lionel.

"His father has some queer notions just like you and Marta."

"If only Roger were here!" came unbidden and unwelcomely into Penelope's mind.

She thought hard that afternoon and announced the result to Marta at night, after Lionel and George were in bed.

“Marta, I have come to the conclusion that what Lionel needs is a companion ... a chum ... a pal. All boys should have one. The Ingleside boys are all too far away ... and really, after what Jem told Lionel about toad spit ... But you know they say a child with no one but grown-ups around him will have an inferiority complex. Or do I mean a superiority complex?”

“I think you don’t know what you mean yourself,” said Marta. “Have a talk with Mrs. Blythe. She is in town, I hear.”

“Mrs. Blythe is a B.A., but I have never heard that she was an authority on child psychology ...”

“Her children are the best behaved I’ve ever seen,” said Marta.

“Well, anyhow I have decided that Lionel needs a companion.”

“You don’t mean that you are going to adopt *another* boy!” said Marta in a tone of consternation.

“Not *adopt* exactly ... oh, dear me no, not adopt, Marta. But I simply mean to get one for the summer ... till school opens. Mrs. Elwood was talking about one yesterday ... I think his name is Theodore Wells ...”

“Jim Wells’ nephew! Why, Penelope Craig! Wasn’t his mother an actress or something?”

“Yes ... Sandra Valdez. Jim Wells’ brother married her ten years ago in New York or London or somewhere. They soon parted and Sidney came home with his boy. He died at Jim’s farm. Jim has looked after the boy but you know he died last month and his wife says she has enough to do to look after her own.”

“He was never very welcome there, from all I’ve heard,” muttered Marta.

“She wants to find a home for him until she can get in touch with Sandra Valdez ... and I feel it is Providential, Marta ...”

“I feel the old Scratch has had more to do with it,” said Marta.

“Marta ... Marta ... you really mustn’t. Mrs. Elwood says he is a dear little chap ... looks just like an angel ...”

“Mrs. Elwood would say anything. She is a sister of Mrs. Jim Wells. Penelope, you don’t know what that child is like ... or what he may teach Lionel ...”

“Mrs. Elwood says the Wells children are all well behaved and well brought up ...”

“Oh, she said that, did she? Well, they’re her own nephews and nieces. She ought to know ...”

“Suppose he is a little mischievous ...”

“Oh, she admitted that, did she? Well, children should be mischievous. I may be an old maid but I know that. They say those Blythe youngsters you’re so fond of quoting ...”

“I very seldom mention them, Marta! But Dr. Galbraith ... well, that is one thing that worried me about Lionel. He isn’t half mischievous enough. In fact, he is not mischievous at all. It isn’t normal. When Theodore comes ...”

“Theodore! That is even worse than Lionel.”

“Now, Marta, be nice,” said Penelope pleadingly. “You *know* I’m right.”

“If you had a husband, Penelope, I wouldn’t care how many children you adopted. But for two old maids to start bringing up boys ...”

“That will do, Marta. A woman who has made a study of child psychology as I have knows more about bringing up children than many a mother. My mind is made up.”

“Oh, how I wish Dr. Roger was home!” groaned Marta to herself. “Not that I suppose he would have the slightest influence either.”

Theodore looked as Lionel should have looked. He was slender and had delicate features, with red-gold hair and astonishingly lustrous grey eyes.

“So this is Theodore,” said Penelope graciously.

“Yes’m,” said Theodore with a charming smile. There was evidently nothing of Lionel’s gruffness about him.

“And this is Lionel,” smiled Penelope.

“I’ve heard about him,” said Theodore. “Hello, Bumps!”

“Hello, Red,” condescended Lionel.

“Suppose you go out into the garden and get acquainted before dinner,” suggested Penelope, still smiling. Things were going much better than she had dared hope.

Marta sniffed. She knew something about the said Theodore Wells.

A few minutes later bloodcurdling howls came from the backyard. Penelope and Marta both rushed out in dismay to find the two boys in a furious clinch on the gravelled walk, kicking, clawing and yelling. Penelope and Marta dragged them apart with difficulty. Their faces were covered with dirt. Theodore had a cut lip and another of Lionel's teeth was missing. George was up on a maple tree, apparently wondering if her tail really belonged to her.

"Oh, darlings, darlings," cried Penelope distractedly. "This is dreadful ... you mustn't fight ... you *mustn't* ..."

It was evident that for the moment, at least, Penelope had forgotten the rules of child psychology.

"He pulled George's tail," snarled Lionel. "Nobody ain't going to pull my cat's tail."

"How did I know it was your cat?" demanded Red. "You hit first. Look at my lip, Miss Craig."

"It's bleeding," said Penelope with a shudder. She could never endure the sight of blood. It turned her sick.

"It's only a scratch," said Marta. "I'll put some vaseline on it."

"Kiss the place and make it well," jeered Theodore. Lionel said nothing. He was busy hunting for his lost tooth.

"At least he isn't a crybaby," Penelope comforted herself. "Neither of them is a crybaby."

Marta took Lionel to the kitchen. He went willingly because he had found his tooth. Penelope took Theodore to the bathroom, where she washed his face, much against his will, and discovered that his neck and body were in deplorable need of attention also. A bath was indicated.

"Gee, I'd hate to be as clean as you all the time," said Theodore, looking himself over afterwards. "Do you wash yourself over every day?"

"Of course, dear."

"All over?"

"Of course."

"If I wash my face at the pump once a week ... thorrerly ... won't that be enough?" demanded Theodore. "And can I call you momma? You smell nice."

"I think ... Aunty would be better," faltered Penelope.

“I’ve got all the aunts I want,” objected Theodore. “But I ain’t got no mamma. Just as you say, though. Say, that tooth of Bumps was ready to come out anyhow. What are cats’ tails for if they ain’t to be pulled?”

“But you don’t want to hurt poor little animals, do you? If you were a kitten and had a tail, would you like to have it pulled?”

“If I was a kitten and had a tail,” sang Theodore. He really sang it ... in a delightfully clear, true, sweet voice. Lionel could sing, too, it appeared. The two sat on the steps after dinner and sang all kinds of songs together. Some of the songs Penelope thought rather terrible for small boys but it was such a comfort to find Lionel taking an interest in something at last. She had been right. All Lionel really needed was a companion.

“Did you hear how they ended up that bee-i-ee-eee song?” demanded Marta. “They *didn’t* end it with ‘way down yonder in the field.’ What if Mrs. Raynor had heard them?”

Mrs. Raynor had not heard them. But a certain Mrs. Embree, who was passing at that moment, had. It was all over the neighbourhood by next day. Someone telephoned it to Penelope. Did she really think Theodore Wells a fit companion for her nephew?

By now Penelope, who had screwed the truth out of Marta, was wondering herself. Marta had found the two boys at the pump before lunch.

“What’s the matter?” demanded Marta, looking at Lionel’s face.

“Nothing,” said Lionel.

Penelope came running out.

“*What is the matter?*”

“Red was chewing beet root and he spit on me,” growled Lionel.

“Oh, Theodore! Theodore!”

“Well, you told me I mustn’t fight,” yelled Theodore, who seemed to be in a towering rage. “There wasn’t nothing I could do but spit.”

“But why ... why spit?” said Penelope weakly.

“He said he bet his father could swear worse’n my father could if they were alive. I ain’t going to let anybody run down my relations. I’ve got more guts than that. If I can’t fight I’m going to spit ... spit *hard*. But I forgot about the beet root,” he added frankly.

“There’s just one of two things you can do, Penelope,” said Marta, after Lionel’s face had been purified. “You can send this Theodore young one

back to his aunt ...”

“I can’t do that, Marta. It would look so ... so ... it would be a confession of defeat. And think how Roger would laugh at me.”

“So Roger’s opinion is beginning to have some weight with you,” thought Marta with satisfaction.

“And really Lionel is a changed boy even in so short a time,” protested Penelope ... “I mean he’s taking an interest in things ...”

“Then you can let them fight it out when they want to fight,” said Marta. “It don’t hurt boys to fight. They get a lot of divilment out of their systems in that way. Look at them two now ... out behind the garage, digging for worms, as good friends as if they’d never fought or spit. No, don’t quote the Ingleside gang to me ... they’ve got a different lot of parents altogether ... and a different bringing-up. It makes all the difference in the world.”

“And of course, frustration *is* about the worst thing possible for a child,” murmured poor Penelope, still holding a few illusions about her like tattered rags.

There was no more frustration with Lionel and Theodore, as far as fighting was concerned. They had another set-to that day but they also had a trout-fishing excursion up the brook and came home triumphantly with a string of very decent little trout which Marta fried for their dinners. But Penelope confessed to herself in dire humiliation that she would be letting them fight more because she felt powerless to stop them than because she felt really convinced about the frustration problem. And she wondered what Mrs. Elwood’s conception of a well-trained boy was. It was not of course possible that Mrs. Elwood was ...

Still, amid all her distraction of mind in the ensuing weeks there was the faint comfort that another problem regarding Lionel had ceased to be. He was amused. From early morn to dewy eve he and Theodore were “up to something,” as Marta put it. They fought frequently and Penelope was sure the whole countryside must hear their wild howls and think they were being shamefully whipped or something of the sort. But Lionel condescended to explain to Penelope that “it had been awful lonesome before Red came with no one to fight with.”

Theodore had an explosive temper which vanished as soon as it had exploded. Between times, even Marta admitted his charm. After all, Penelope tried to convince herself, their mischief was really no more than

normal. Likely if one only knew, the Ingleside boys did precisely the same things.

That snake on the laundry floor ... of course poor Marta *had* got a nasty fright.

“He’s a *good* snake,” Theodore had protested. “He wouldn’t hurt you.”

It really was a harmless garter snake ... but still a snake was a snake.

And how charmingly he had assured Mrs. Peabody that her hat would come all right if she steamed it. Theodore hadn’t meant to sit on it ... Penelope wished she felt quite sure of that, but she knew how both boys hated Mrs. Peabody ... and really Mrs. Peabody had been rather disagreeable. Why had she left her hat on the garden seat anyhow? She had declared it was a Paris hat but Penelope had seen Mrs. Dr. Blythe wearing a much smarter one at a Charlottetown tea a few days before and she had bought it from a Charlottetown milliner.

Of course Lionel shouldn’t have turned the hose on the baker’s boy and the living room *was* a terrible sight after their pillow fight. Unfortunately one of the pillows had burst and of course Mrs. Raynor had to bring the Bishop and his family to call at that very moment. They had all been very nice about it and the Bishop had told of some much worse things *he* had done when a boy ... to be sure, his wife had reminded him that his father had given him some terrible whippings for his kididoes. But the Bishop had replied that times were changed and children were treated very differently now. Mrs. Raynor looked as if the whole thing had been planned as an insult to her.

But Penelope really couldn’t see why everyone blamed the boys so much the night she and Marta thought they were lost. It was all her own fault that she hadn’t looked in the sleeping porch. They had simply gone to bed after supper without saying a word to anyone and were sleeping soundly and sweetly, with George purring between them, when the summer colony was searching for them and there was talk of calling over the Charlottetown police. Penelope for the first time in her life was on the verge of hysterics because someone was sure she had seen them in an automobile with a very suspicious-looking man just at dark. Finally someone had suggested looking in the sleeping porch and then people had said, so Penelope was informed, “Just what you would expect of those two young demons,” when the poor tired little creatures had simply gone to

bed. Even Marta was indignant. She said Jem Blythe out at Ingleside had done almost exactly the same thing one night and nobody ever thought of punishing him. Susan Baker had told her all about it and just seemed thankful no worse had happened to him.

But Theodore really had to be punished when he cut his initials on the new dining room table the afternoon Penelope was over in town at a meeting of the Child Welfare Committee. Marta spanked him before Penelope got home and Theodore had said scornfully when it was over, “*That didn’t hurt. You don’t know anything about spanking. If you’d take some lessons from Aunt Ella now!*”

“There are times,” thought Marta bitterly, “when a man would be comforting.”

Penelope, looking at her once beautiful table, almost agreed with her.

And she never forgot the afternoon she called on Mrs. Freeman. She was informed that Theodore had set Mrs. Freeman’s dog and Mrs. Anstey’s dog fighting, with the result that Mrs. Anstey, who was neurotic, had to be taken to the hospital because of it ... her darling dog had had a piece of his ear chewed off. Moreover Theodore and Lionel had taken off poor little Bobby Green’s clothes entirely and made him go home stark naked without them.

“Stark naked,” said Mrs. Freeman in tones of horror.

“Well, children wear so little in summer nowadays,” faltered poor Penelope.

“They don’t go entirely naked,” said Mrs. Freeman, “except perhaps up the back cove at evening where nobody sees them. And when I scolded Theodore both he and Lionel made snoots at me.”

Penelope had no earthly idea what snoots were and dared not ask.

“If I can just keep from crying till I get home,” she thought.

But when she got home, Mrs. Banks, who lived by the church, was just calling her up on the telephone to say that Theodore and Lionel had taken the white marble lamb off the top of little David Archbold’s tomb to play with. The cement had been loose for years, of course, but nobody had *ever* touched it before.

Penelope despatched Marta to bring the boys home and replace the lamb but unluckily they had dropped it in the river and Penelope had to get old Tom Martin to fish for it. It took him three days to find it ... and even then

one of the ears was broken off and was never recovered. During all this time Mrs. Archbold was in bed with two doctors in attendance ... though it was said to be forty years since little David's death.

That was only the first of many telephone calls. Penelope was soon driven almost mad with telephone calls. People had discovered that Miss Craig was inclined to be a little on her dignity when anything was said to her about those two young Satans she had adopted and it was easier to say it on the telephone and hang up when you had finished.

"Will you be good enough to look after your boys, Miss Craig? They have been playing at harpooning elephants and have harpooned our cow ..."

"Miss Craig, I think your boys are digging out a skunk in Mr. Dowling's wood lot ..."

"Miss Craig, one of your boys has been most impertinent to me ... he called me an old owl when I warned him off my flowerbeds ..."

"Miss Craig, I'm sorry but I really cannot allow my children to play with those boys of yours any longer. They use such dreadful language. One of them threatened to kick Robina on the *bottom* ..."

"She said I was a brat you'd picked out of the gutter, Aunt Penelope," explained Theodore that night, "and I didn't kick her bum ... I only said I'd do it if she didn't shut up."

"Miss Craig, perhaps you don't know that your boys are gorging themselves with green apples in that old deserted orchard of the Carsons ..."

Penelope knew it that night for she had to be up till the grey dawn with them. She would *not* send for Roger, as Marta wished.

"I wonder what it would be like to sleep ... really sleep ... again," she said.

Then she shuddered. Was her voice actually getting querulous?

But gone forever were the peace and quiet she loved. The only times she ever felt at ease about the boys were when they were asleep or singing together out in the twilight orchard. They really did sound like young angels then. And *why* were people so hard on them? Marta had told her that the Ingleside boys had tied another boy to the stake and set him on fire! Yet everyone seemed to think the Ingleside family a model one.

"I suppose they expect more of mine because I have always been known as an expert on child psychology," she thought wearily. "Of course they expect them to be perfect on that account."

Once Lionel smiled at her ... suddenly ... spontaneously ... a dear little smile with two teeth missing. It transfigured his whole face. Penelope found herself smiling back at him.

"It's only two weeks till school opens," she told Marta. "Things will be better then."

"Or worse," said Marta dourly. "It'll be a woman teacher. What they need is a man."

"The Blythe family have a father but the stories one hears ..."

"I've heard you say yourself it doesn't do to believe half you hear," retorted Marta. "Besides, people expect more of your boys. You've been talking for years about how to bring up children ... Mrs. Blythe just minds her own business ..."

"Don't quote Mrs. Blythe to me again," said Penelope, with sudden passion. "I don't believe her children are a bit better than other people's children."

"I never heard her claim they were," retorted Marta. "It is Susan Baker who does the bragging ..."

"How is the family coming on?" bantered Dr. Galbraith on his first call after his return.

"Splendidly," said Penelope gallantly. They *were*, she told herself. It was *not* a lie. They were perfectly healthy, happy, normal boys. Roger Galbraith should *never* suspect that she lay awake at nights worrying about them and the downfall of her theories, or what a horrid feeling came over her whenever she heard the telephone ring.

"*You* aren't coming on splendidly, Penny," said Dr. Galbraith, with real concern in his face and tone. "You're thin ... and your eyes have a strained look ..."

"It is the heat," knowing with another shudder that she was telling a lie. "It's been a frightfully hot summer." ... Well, it had. And she was very tired. She seemed to realize it all at once. And yet the last time she had seen Mrs. Blythe ... she seemed to be running up against her almost continually now ... she had so many friends among the summer colony and cars made the distance between town and Glen St. Mary almost nothing

now. And Mrs. Blythe had six children. Penelope would never have admitted it but she was really coming to hate Mrs. Blythe ... she, Penelope Craig, who had never hated anyone in her life. And yet what had Mrs. Blythe ever done to her? Nothing but have a family whom everyone praised. Penelope would never dream of admitting she was jealous ... she, Penelope Craig. Besides, she had heard plenty of tales, whether true or not ...

Well, she wouldn't make any dates for fall or winter lectures. Mrs. Blythe never went about the country talking. That woman again! But anyhow you couldn't be expected to go careering about the country telling other women how to train their children when you had two boys of your own to look after. She would be as stay-at-home and domestic as Mrs. Blythe herself.

"That woman is becoming an obsession with me," said Penelope desperately. "I must stop thinking about her. *Her* children have had advantages mine have not. I wish Roger wasn't so chummy with Dr. Blythe. Of course the man brags about his children ... all men do. And Theodore and Lionel never tried to burn anybody at the stake ... while Mrs. Blythe was an orphan from goodness knows where. She has simply got on my nerves because Marta is always quoting something that Susan Baker, whoever she is, has said. I don't care if the Ingleside family is perfect. Perhaps Mrs. Blythe has been at some of my lectures ..."

The thought was cheering and removed from Penelope's mind the fear that she was going insane. Besides, Roger was back. There *was* a comfort in the thought, though Penelope would never have admitted it.

"Please, Aunt Penelope," said Lionel ... who had begun calling her "aunt" quite naturally after Theodore came ... "Red has jumped off the roof of the garage and he's lying on the stones. I think he's dead. He said he'd jump off if I wouldn't buy his dead rat for George. I knew George wouldn't eat a dead rat. And I wouldn't ... and he did. Does a funeral cost much?"

This was probably the longest speech Lionel had ever made in his life ... at least to a grown-up person.

Before it was finished Penelope and Marta were running like mad creatures across the yard to the garage.

Theodore was lying face downwards in a horrible, huddled little heap on the cruel-looking stones.

“Every bone of him is broken,” groaned Marta. Penelope wrung her hands.

“Telephone for Roger ... quick, Marta, quick!”

Marta was quick. As she disappeared into the house a lady in flowered chiffon, with very golden hair and very brilliant complexion and very red lips, came floating across the yard to where Penelope was standing in a trance of horror, not daring to touch Theodore.

“Miss Craig, I presume ... I ... I am Sandra Valdez ... I came ... Is that MY CHILD?”

With a piercing shriek the newcomer threw herself in the dust beside the limp body of the dishevelled Theodore.

Penelope seized her by the arm.

“Don’t touch him ... don’t dare to touch him ... you may do him harm ... the doctor will be here any moment.”

“Is *this* how I find my darling?” wailed the lady of the scarlet lips ... which had not paled in the least, any more than her cheeks. “My own, only little son! What have you done to him? Miss Craig, *I ask you what you have done to him?*”

“Nothing ... nothing. He did it himself.”

Oh, life was too terrible! Would Roger never come? Suppose he was out on another case! There were other doctors, of course, but she did not trust them. Nobody but Roger would do.

“See if Red can wriggle his toes,” said Lionel. “If he can his back ain’t broke. Ask him to wriggle his toes, Aunt Penelope.”

“Oh, my son ... my son ... my poor little son!” moaned Miss Valdez, rocking backward and forward over her son’s apparently unconscious body. “I should never have left you to the care of others ... I should have taken you with me ...”

“What’s all this?”

Dr. Galbraith had dropped in for a call while Marta was still trying frantically to locate him. It did not matter to Penelope that Dr. Blythe of Glen St. Mary was with him. They were on their way to a consultation. Nothing mattered but Theodore. Penelope almost flung herself on Dr. Galbraith’s breast.

“Oh, Roger ... Theodore jumped from the roof. I think he’s dead ... and this woman ... oh, can you do anything?”

“Not if he’s dead, of course,” said Dr. Galbraith skeptically. He seemed very cool about it all.

“IS HE DEAD?” demanded Sandra Valdez in capitals, springing up and confronting Dr. Galbraith like a queen of tragedy.

“I don’t think so,” said Dr. Galbraith, still coolly. Dr. Blythe seemed trying to hide a smile.

Dr. Galbraith stopped and tried Theodore’s pulse. His lips tightened ominously and he turned him callously over.

Theodore’s blue eyes opened.

“My son!” breathed Miss Valdez. “Oh, tell me you are living! Just tell me that!”

Then she gave a shriek as the doctor unceremoniously grasped Theodore’s shoulder and pulled him to his feet.

“You brute! Oh, you brute! Miss Craig, please tell me what you mean by having such a man? Surely there are doctors in Charlottetown capable ...”

“Dr. Galbraith is one of the best doctors on the Island,” said Marta indignantly.

“What does this mean?” said Dr. Galbraith, in a tone which Theodore understood. Dr. Blythe was actually laughing.

“I just wanted to scare them all,” said Theodore with unaccustomed meekness. “I ... I didn’t jump from the roof ... I just told Bumps I would to scare him. And when his back was turned I just ran round here and yelled and flopped. That’s all, honest.”

Dr. Galbraith turned to Penelope.

“I am going to teach this young man a lesson he won’t forget in a hurry. And you are going to marry me inside of three weeks. I’m not asking you ... I’m telling you. And no interference. It’s time somebody did something. Child psychology is all very well but you’ve lost fifteen pounds since I’ve been away ... and I’m at the end of my patience.”

“Congratulations,” said that abominable Dr. Blythe.

“Don’t you dast touch Red,” yelled Lionel. “This ain’t any of your business. Aunt Penelope is bringing us up. If you do I’ll bite you ... I’ll ...”

Dr. Blythe took Lionel by the scruff of the neck and set him on the gatepost.

“That will be enough out of you, my lad. You stay there until Dr. Galbraith says you can come down.”

A few minutes later certain sounds from the interior of the barn indicated that Theodore was not so indifferent to Dr. Galbraith’s punishment as he had been to Marta’s.

“He’s killing him,” gasped Sandra Valdez with another shriek.

“Oh, his life is safe enough,” said Dr. Blythe, still laughing.

But it was Penelope who stepped in front of Sandra Valdez ... Penelope, of all people.

“Don’t you interfere. Theodore has a spanking coming to him ... several spankings. I’ve been a weak, silly fool ... yes, Dr. Blythe, you have a right to laugh.”

“I wasn’t laughing at you, Miss Craig,” said Dr. Blythe apologetically. “I was laughing at the trick Theodore had played. I knew the moment we drove in at the gate it was only a trick. So did Galbraith.”

“After this is over you may have him, Miss Valdez,” said Penelope. “Bumps is enough for me ... even with ...”

Miss Valdez was suddenly meek ... and natural.

“I ... I don’t want him ... I can’t be bothered with a child in my career. You must realize that, Miss Craig. I only wanted to be sure he had a good home and was well-treated.”

“He has ... he is ...”

“And had a mother ... a loving mother ...”

“He will. And,” added Penelope to herself, “a father, too. Laugh away, Dr. Blythe. I suppose your own children are such perfect ...”

“They are very far from being perfect,” said Dr. Blythe, who *had* stopped laughing. “In fact, they ... the boys at least ... are very much like Lionel and Theodore in many ways. But they have three people to correct them. So we keep them in fair order. When a spanking is indicated we wait till Susan Baker is out of the house. And ... will you let me say it? ... I am very glad you have made up your mind to marry Dr. Galbraith at last.”

“Who told you I had?” blushed Penelope.

“I heard what he said. And I knew it when I heard you forbid Miss Valdez to interfere. We doctors are wise old fellows. And I am not running down your studies in child psychology, Miss Craig. There is a wonderful

lot of wisdom in them. Mrs. Blythe has a bookcase full of volumes about it. But every once in so long ...”

“Something else is required,” admitted Penelope. “I’ve been a perfect idiot, Dr. Blythe. I hope you and Mrs. Blythe will come to Willow Run the next time you are in town. I ... I should like to become better acquainted with her.”

“I can’t answer for myself ... I generally come in on professional business only. But I’m sure Mrs. Blythe will be delighted. She was charmed with you the day she met you at Mrs. Elston’s party.”

“Really?” said Penelope, wondering why she should feel so highly gratified. “I’m sure we have many things in common.”

The sounds from the garage had ceased.

“Will Dr. Galbraith whip us often?” inquired Lionel curiously.

“I am sure he will not,” said Dr. Blythe. “For one thing, you will not require it. For another, I am sure your Aunt Penelope would not allow it.”

“As if she could stop him when he had made up his mind,” said Lionel. “I’ll bet Mrs. Blythe couldn’t stop you.”

“Oh, couldn’t she! You don’t know as much about matrimony now as you will some day, my lad. But I recommend it for all that. And I’m sure you’ll like Dr. Galbraith for an uncle.”

“I’ve always liked him ... and I think Aunt Penelope should have married him long ago,” said Lionel.

“How did you know he wanted to marry me?” cried Penelope.

“Red told me. ‘Sides, everyone knows it. I like a man round. He’ll keep Marta in her place.’”

“Oh, you mustn’t talk of your Aunt Marta like that, Lionel.”

“I’ll bet he won’t call me Lionel.”

“Why don’t you like Lionel?” inquired Penelope curiously.

“It’s such a sissy name,” said Lionel.

“It was the name your dear mother chose for you,” said Penelope reproachfully. “Of course, she may have been a wee bit romantic ...”

“Don’t you dast say a word against my mother,” said Lionel angrily.

Penelope could never have told why, but this pleased her. And Red and Dr. Galbraith were looking as if they were quite good friends. After all, the thrashing had not likely been a very severe one. Roger was not that kind of a man. And even Mrs. Blythe studied books on child culture. The world

was not such a bad place after all. And Red and Bumps were not worse than other boys after all. She would wager they were just about as good as the Ingleside boys ... only the latter had had the advantages of a father.

Well, Red and Bumps ...

The Seventh Evening

SUCCESS

*Come, drain the cup held to our lips at last,
Though it may yield the briny taste of tears,
For this we have foregone our joy of youth,
For this we have lived bitter, patient years ...
What tang does brew of fig and thistle keep?
Let us drink deep!*

*Oh, shudder not ... the goblet is of gold!
For this we bent our knee at a grim shrine
While others danced to kind and merry gods!
For this we put aside life's choicest wine,
To slake our still unsated thirst lift up
This sacramental cup!*

*Surely 'twill pay for all that we have missed ...
Laughter unlaughed, sweet hours of love and sleep,
Hungers unsatisfied and barren dreams,
How the sly years are mocking us! Drink deep
And vaunt ... for who can guess it is a lie? ...
The price was not too high.*

*Was it for such a devil's jorum we
Bartered our precious things and turned from ease,
Winning by dint of many a gallant day
Splendid defeats and abject victories?*

*But see you not how bright the diamonds wink?
Be brave ... once more ... and drink!*

Anne Blythe

ANNE:- “Boys, I’ve written a poem today your father won’t like.”
(*Reads it.*)

JEM:- “Mums, what made you write such a thing? I’m sure you and dad have made a success of your lives.”

ANNE:- “Oh, I was just expressing a mood ... picturing a man who had sacrificed everything for a certain kind of success and then found it wasn’t worth winning but wouldn’t admit it. There are plenty such in the world.”

JEM:- “Wasn’t it because their desire for success was selfish and their sacrifices did them no good in the end?”

SUSAN:- “Well, your father is a most successful doctor and has made sacrifices galore. I’m sure he doesn’t regret them or think it wasn’t worthwhile.”

ANNE:- “Of course he doesn’t. He always wanted to help people.”

WALTER:- “Don’t let him see that poem, mother. He might think you meant him.”

SUSAN:- “Your father has too much sense for that, Walter. He would understand what your mother meant. I do myself, in my humble way. Old Tom Scott over at Mowbray Narrows spent all his life squeezing and saving and denied his family everything. And on his deathbed he said, ‘I guess it wasn’t worthwhile, boys. You’ll only waste the money having a good time.’ And they did. But you and the doctor, Mrs. Dr. dear, have had your good times and yet you are successful. You haven’t missed much, as I reckon it.”

ANNE, *dreamily*:- “If Shakespeare had only kept a diary! What did *he* think of success? I remember old Richard Clark of Carmody had a queer habit of saying, ‘When I meet Moses in heaven I’m going to ask him, etc.’ So when I meet Shakespeare in heaven there are a million questions I mean to ask him.”

SUSAN:- “From what I remember learning about him when I went to school I doubt very much if he did go to heaven. And whether or no, Walter, I wish you would remember that while writing poetry is a very good amusement for a woman it is no real occupation for a man.”

THE GATE OF DREAM

*I seek a little hidden gate
That will swing wide to me,
Haply beneath a sunset cloud,
Or moonrise wizardry,
Or in some winking vale of noon
And shadow I may find it soon.*

*A star-like moth may be my guide
Where dear, dim pathways run,
Or a sweet something beckon me,
Fragrance and song in one,
Or a west wind may pipe me on
To it in some pale amber dawn.*

*Beside it blooms a single rose
By dews ambrosial fed,
Some say it is all ivory white,
But I know it is red,
And Memory fond and Hope elate
Are the twin warders of the gate.*

*Beyond it in the crystal sky
My Spanish castle towers,
And all its ways are garlanded
With my ungathered flowers,
While haunting music faintly sings
Of exquisite, immortal things.*

*Some halcyon days I never lived
And waiting there for me,
And laughter that I somehow missed*

*Echoes elusively ...
Oh, poignant quest! Oh, lure supreme!
When shall I find my gate of dream?*

Anne Blythe

ANNE:- "I composed that in Lover's Lane when I was teaching school in Avonlea ... thanks to you, Gilbert. There seemed so many gates of dream then."

SUSAN:- "Will you please tell me, Mrs. Dr. dear, what a Spanish castle is and was there really one in Avonlea?"

ANNE:- "A Spanish castle is just something you hope to possess one day. That is all. Mine eventually turned out to be our darling House of Dreams."

DR. BLYTHE:- "Lover's Lane was a lovely spot. It is lovely still. My Spanish castle seems to have been the same as yours, Anne. And we all ask in youth when we shall find our gate of dream."

ANNE:- "Well, we found ours, after much misunderstanding."

SUSAN:- "Ingleside seems to me like a castle, after that miserable pantry in your House of Dreams which I shall never forget. If Spanish castles have as many good pantries as Ingleside I approve of them."

AN OLD FACE

*Calm as a reaped harvest height
Lying in the dim moonlight,
Yet with wrinkles round the eyes,
Jolly, tolerant and wise:
Beauty gone but in its place
Such a savour, such a grace
Won from the fantastic strife
Of this odd business we call life.*

*Many a wild, adventurous year
Wrote its splendid record here,
Stars of many an old romance
Shine in that ironic glance;
Many a hideous vital day
Came and smote and passed away,
Now this face is ripe and glad,
Patient, sane, a little sad.*

*Friend to life yet with no fear
Of the darkness drawing near;
Those so-gallant eyes must see
Dawnlight of eternity,
See the Secret Vision still
High on some supernal hill ...
Tis a daring hope I hold
To look like this when I am old.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “One of your best, Anne. And I think I know the
inspiration. Old Captain Jim, wasn’t it?”

ANNE, *dreamily*:- “Partly. But there were others, too ... all blended together.”

SUSAN:- “It reminds me of an uncle of my mother’s.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Do you really think life a fantastic business, Anne?”

ANNE, *smiling*:- “Parts of it are, don’t you think?”

SUSAN, *to herself*:- “Well, I never had any beauty to lose, so as far as that goes, getting old won’t matter to me. And if that queer old fellow they call Whiskers-on-the-Moon gets old he won’t lose much beauty either. But he is fantastic enough.”

The Reconciliation

Miss Shelley was going over to Lowbridge to forgive Lisle Stephens for stealing Ronald Evans from her thirty years ago.

She had had a hard struggle to bring herself to do it. Night after night she had wrestled with herself. She looked so pale and wan that her niece secretly consulted Dr. Blythe about her and got the tonic he recommended.

But Miss Shelley would not take the tonic. The struggle continued. Yet morning after morning she confessed herself defeated. And she knew quite well that she could not look the Rev. Mr. Meredith in the face until she had won the battle. He lived on such a high spiritual plane ... to quote Mrs. Blythe ... that it was hard for him to understand things like the quarrel between herself and Lisle Stephens.

“We must forgive ... we must not cherish old bitternesses and grievances and wrongs,” he had said, looking like an inspired prophet.

The Presbyterians of Glen St. Mary worshipped him ... especially Miss Shelley. He was a widower and had a family but she would not let herself remember that. Neither did she think any more highly of Mrs. Dr. Blythe after hearing her say to her husband as they had come down the church steps, “I suppose I’ll have to forgive Josie Pye after that sermon.”

Miss Shelley had no idea who Josie Pye was or what had been the nature of the quarrel between her and Mrs. Blythe. But it could never have been as bitter as the one between her and Lisle Stephens.

Miss Shelley could not conceive of Mrs. Blythe cherishing bitterness for thirty years. She liked her but she thought her too shallow for that. She had been heard to say that it was a pity Dr. Blythe had not selected a woman of deeper nature for his wife.

Miss Shelley's neighbours had said that she thought he ought to have waited for her niece. But Miss Shelley did not know that and in due time she came to like Mrs. Blythe very well.

And at last she had brought herself to forgive Lisle and not only forgive her but to go and tell her she forgave her.

She felt indescribably uplifted over her victory. If only Mr. Meredith might know of it! But there was no chance of that. She could never tell him and she was very sure Lisle would not. She drew her shabby fur coat around her withered throat and looked at all travellers who passed her with condescending pity. It was not likely one of them knew the triumph of thus conquering their baser selves.

Lisle Stephens and she had been friends all through childhood and girlhood. Lisle had no end of beaux, but she, Myrtle Shelley, a little, thin, red-haired girl with large blue eyes, never had any until Ronald Evans came. Lisle had been away then on a visit to her aunt in Toronto.

It was apparently love at first sight with them both. Ronald was handsome. Slim-waisted and lean-hipped, with sleek, dark hair and dark, heavy-lidded eyes. There had never been anyone like him in Glen St. Mary.

Then came the barn dance.

Grey Myrtle Shelley recalled that dance as of yesterday. She had looked forward to it so eagerly. It would be the first time she had danced with Ronald. They would go home together beneath the moon which seemed waiting for the miracle.

Perhaps he would kiss her. She knew the Glen St. Mary girls were often kissed by the boys ... she had even heard some of them boast of it ... but she, Myrtle Shelley, had never been kissed.

She remembered the gown she had worn to the dance. Her mother thought it very frivolous. It was of pale green nun's veiling with a red belt. She thought it became her. Ronald had once told her her skin was like a flower. That had been flattery but it was pleasant to hear. She had not had a great many compliments in her life.

When she reached the barn the first thing she had seen was Ronald dancing with Lisle, who had returned home that day. Ronald waved his hand to Myrtle but he did not ask her to dance. He danced with Lisle most

of the evening and when they were not dancing they were sitting out in one of the buggies behind the barn.

He ate supper with her and after supper they disappeared. He never even looked at Myrtle with his handsome, careless eyes.

She came face to face with them later under the gay Chinese lanterns strung outside the barn. Lisle was flushed and excited. Her thick, wheat-hued hair was tied close to her head with a fillet of blue ribbon. Her tilted, golden-brown eyes were shining. What chance had anyone against eyes like that?

“Hello, darling,” she said to Myrtle, breezily and brazenly. “I just got home today. What have you been doing with yourself while I was away? Busy as a bee, as usual, I suppose, you industrious little creature. Mr. Evans, have you met my friend, Miss Shelley? We’ve always been great chums.”

Myrtle had lifted her hand and slapped Lisle across her face.

“What on earth do you mean, Myrtle Shelley?” Lisle had exclaimed indignantly.

To do Lisle justice she had not the faintest idea why she had been slapped. She had never heard that Ronald Evans was “beauing” Myrtle Shelley ... though it might not have made much difference if she had!

Myrtle said nothing ... had simply turned her back and gone home.

“Well, of all the jealous creatures!” Lisle had exclaimed when Ronald had made some lame explanation.

Lisle had flaunted Ronald for several weeks after that, then dropped him before he went away. She said he had nothing in either his head or his pocket. She tried to make up with Myrtle but was icily repulsed.

The next spring Lisle had married Justin Rogers, a Lowbridge merchant, who had been “after her” for years, and had gone to Lowbridge to live. Myrtle Shelley had never seen her since, though she had heard ten years ago of Justin Rogers’ death.

But now, thirty years after that dreadful night, she was going to forgive Lisle, fully and freely, at last. She revelled in her luxury of forgiveness.

It was quite a distance from the Glen to Lowbridge and Miss Shelley refused all offers of a “lift.” Her feet ached and the nipping wind brought tears into her faded blue eyes. She also knew that the tip of her nose was red. But she kept on resolutely.

Lisle's house was a trim, well-groomed one. It was said Justin Rogers had left his widow well provided for. The bay window was full of very fine geraniums and begonias. Miss Shelley had never had any luck with begonias, though Susan Baker had given her slips from the finest plants at Ingleside.

Lisle came to the door. Miss Shelley knew her at once. The same sleek curves, the same tilted eyes, the same golden hair, with hardly a thread of grey in it.

"Just as flippant as ever," thought Myrtle virtuously. "Lipstick! And her fifty!"

But she noted that Lisle was beginning to have pouches under her eyes. There was some satisfaction in that ... until she remembered Mr. Meredith.

"I ... I feel that I *should* know that face," said Lisle. Her voice had not changed. It was still smooth and creamy.

"I am Myrtle Shelley."

"Myrtle ... darling! Why, I'd never have known you ... how many years is it since I've seen you? Of course I hardly ever leave home ... but I *am* glad to see you again. We used to be such chums, didn't we? Come right in. You don't mean to tell me you've walked all the way down here from the Glen! You poor lamb! Aren't you just dead? Surely somebody might have given you a lift. I always say people are getting more selfish all the time."

"I didn't want a lift," said Myrtle.

"You were always so independent ... and a good walker, too. Do you remember the long walks we used to take together around the harbour?"

"Yes, I remember them," said Myrtle. "And I remember another walk I took ... alone."

"Oh, take *this* chair," said Lisle, wondering what on earth Myrtle meant. She had heard she was getting a little queer. But fifty was too young for that. Lisle Rogers, at fifty, still thought herself quite young. Hadn't Dr. Blythe guessed her age as forty?

"You'll find it heaps more comfortable. Why, you are shivering. A good cup of tea will warm you up in a trice. Do you remember how we used to laugh at the old ladies with their cups of tea? Fifty seemed to us very venerable then, didn't it?"

"I didn't come for a cup of tea," said Myrtle.

“Of course not. But we’ll have one all the same. It won’t be a mite of trouble. And we’ll have a gabfest over old times. Nothing better than a good gossip over a cup of tea, I always say, is there, darling? Though people do say there never was a woman less addicted to gossiping than I am. But with an old friend like you it’s different, isn’t it? We just have a million things to talk over. Didn’t we have some silly old quarrel years ago? What *did* we fight about anyhow?”

Miss Shelley had not intended to sit down in Lisle Rogers’ house but she accepted the proffered chair because she felt a little queer.

“You ... you took Ronald Evans away from me at the Clark barn dance,” she said stonily.

Lisle Rogers stared for a moment. Then her plump shoulders shook.

“Who on earth was Ronald Evans? I seem to remember the name. Was *that* what we squabbled over? Weren’t we a pair of idiots? I was a terror to the boys in them days. I had only to *look* at them. It was my eyes ... folks used to say there was something about them ... sort of come-hither, really. Even yet, there are some old widowers and bachelors ... but I’ve had enough of the men. They are all alike ... blaming every mistake they make on the women. I don’t know but you were wise never to marry. Susan Baker says the only woman she knows that she would change places with is Mrs. Dr. Blythe. I’ve never met her. What is she like?”

Myrtle Shelley had not come to Lowbridge to discuss Mrs. Dr. Anybody. She did not reply and Mrs. Rogers babbled on.

“I remember Ronald now. Whatever became of him? He was a perfect clown to dance with, in spite of his good looks ... stepped all over my toes. I could never wear those slippers again. But he could pay compliments. It all comes back to me though I haven’t thought of him for years. Ain’t men funny? Put your feet up on this hot fender.”

“Do you remember that I slapped your face?” persisted Miss Shelley.

Lisle Rogers burst out laughing as she measured the tea into the teapot.

“Did you really? Yes, I believe you did. I’d forgotten that part of it. Well, never mind sitting on the mourner’s bench now about it, honey. Forgive and forget has always been my motto. Now we’ll have a real nice visit together and never think of all our old foolishness. We were only children anyhow. People *do* quarrel over such simple things, don’t they?”

To be forgiven when you came to forgive!

Myrtle Shelley stood up. Her face had turned a dull crimson. Her faded blue eyes flashed fire. Deliberately she slapped Lisle Rogers across her smiling face ... a hard, no-nonsense-about-it, tingling slap.

“You didn’t remember that first slap,” she said. “Perhaps you will remember this one,” she said.

Miss Shelley walked back to Glen St. Mary minding neither cold wind nor fallen arches after that satisfying slap. She did not even care what the Rev. Mr. Meredith might think about it. She had seldom done anything that gave her such a sense of not having lived in vain. Yes, Lisle would remember *that* slap if she had forgotten the other.

The Cheated Child

Uncle Stephen Brewster's funeral was over ... the house part at least. Everybody had gone to the cemetery, or home ... everybody except Patrick, who wanted to be called Pat and never got anything but Patrick, save from Walter Blythe, out at Glen St. Mary. And he seldom saw Walter. Uncle Stephen did not like the Blythes ... he said he did not like educated women; it spoiled them for their duties in life. So it was only the Brewster boys who ever called Patrick Pat ... and they mostly called him Patty and laughed at him because they knew he hated it.

But he was glad they had not taken him to the cemetery. Graveyards always frightened him ... though he could not tell why. The father he did not remember at all and the mother he remembered so dimly had been swallowed up in a graveyard.

But all at once the loneliness of the big house overwhelmed him. Loneliness is a terrible thing for anyone and most of all when you are only eight and nobody likes you. Patrick knew quite well that nobody liked him ... unless it was Walter Blythe, with whom he had felt a strange kinship the few times they had met. Walter was like himself ... quiet and dreamy ... and did not seem to mind owning up that he was afraid of some things.

Patrick thought that he, himself, was afraid of everything. Perhaps that was why Uncle Stephen had never liked him. He was quiet and dreamy and sensitive ... like Walter Blythe again ... and Uncle Stephen liked boys to be robust and aggressive ... real "he-boys" ... or said he did. As a matter of fact, he did not like any kind of boy. Patrick did not know very much ... but he knew *that*. Though people were always telling him how good his uncle was to him and how grateful he ought to be to him.

The maids, in their stiff, starched uniforms, were busy restoring the rooms to order ... and talking in low voices of how little Master Patrick seemed to feel the death of his uncle. Patrick went into the library where he could escape hearing them and the sense of guilt they gave him ... because he knew quite well that what they were saying was true and his uncle's death did not really matter much to him. It ought to have ... he felt that ... but there was no use in pretending to oneself.

He knew how Walter Blythe would have felt if his father had died or even his Uncle Davy. But he could not feel that way about Uncle Stephen. So he made his escape into the quiet library and curled up on the window seat in the early September sunshine, where he could look out into the maplewood and forget the house.

The house had never liked him either. In his few brief visits to Ingleside ... there was some distant relationship between Dr. Blythe's mother and Uncle Stephen or they would not have been permitted, he felt quite sure ... he had felt, without any telling, that the house loved all the people in it ... "Because we love it," Walter had explained to him. But Oaklands was always watching him ... resenting him. Perhaps it was because it was so big and splendid it had no use at all for a little boy who felt lost and insignificant in its magnificence ... who did it no credit. Perhaps it liked people to be afraid of it, just as Uncle Stephen had liked people to be afraid of him. Patrick knew *that*, too, though he could never have told how he knew it. Walter Blythe, even, could not explain it. Walter owned up to being afraid of many things but he could not understand being afraid of your own relations. But then Walter's relations were very different. Patrick would never have been afraid of Dr. or Mrs. Blythe either.

It was very strange to think of Uncle Stephen being dead. In fact, it was impossible. Patrick could see him plainly still ... as plainly as when he was alive ... sitting over there in his high-backed chair, wearing his heavy brocaded dressing gown, and looking as if he had never been young ... had he, really? A little boy like him and Walter? It seemed absurd ... and would never be old. He did not look old, although he had been silver-haired as long as Patrick could remember. He had some heart ailment and Dr. Galbraith often came to see him. Sometimes Dr. Blythe came in from Glen St. Mary for a consultation. Patrick always had a queer feeling of shame on these occasions, much as he liked Dr. Blythe. Uncle Stephen was

always so rude to him. But Dr. Blythe never seemed to mind. He could sometimes hear him and Dr. Galbraith laughing as they drove away from the house, as if at some exquisite joke. He loved Dr. Blythe and Mrs. Blythe, but he was very careful never to let Uncle Stephen suspect it. He had a secret feeling that if he did he would never be allowed to go to Glen St. Mary again.

Uncle Stephen was usually very sarcastic and remote; but he could be affable and amusing when he liked to be. At least other people thought him amusing. Patrick didn't. He remembered that he had never heard his uncle laugh. Why? Ingleside rang with laughter. Even old Susan Baker laughed upon occasion. He wondered what it would be like to live with a person who laughed sometimes.

He wondered, too, what would become of him, now that Uncle Stephen was dead. Would he just go on living in this unfriendly house, with Miss Sperry giving him lessons and glaring at him through her glasses when he spelled wrongly? The prospect filled him with horror. If he could only escape ... get away anywhere ... hop on that bus which had just gone tearing past the big gates ... go to some place like Ingleside to live!

Patrick had always longed to ride on a bus. The Ingleside children often did. He never could, of course. When Patrick went out he went in the big car driven by Henry. He didn't like the big car and he knew Henry thought him a dumb kid. He had heard him tell the housekeeper so.

If he could only have one single ride on a bus! Or, as he and Walter Blythe had planned, fly across the country on a black courser ... Walter's choice was a white one, and his mother didn't laugh when he told her ... taking fences and everything as a matter of course! That would be glorious. He did that in his other world. But just now that other world seemed too far away. He could not get into it.

Walter Blythe had another world, too. His mother seemed to understand it. But he remembered Dr. Blythe laughing and saying that if they broke their leg on some wild drive it would be a very painful matter, since anaesthetics had not been discovered. Dr. Blythe seemed to think the present century better than all that had gone before.

As long as Patrick could remember he had lived at Oaklands with Uncle Stephen. At first, like a dim dream, there had been a mother; and, like a dimmer dream still, the memory of being with that mother in a lovely

place ... a place something like Ingleside ... in a house that smiled at you on a hill ... in a garden where the walks were bordered with crimson geraniums and big white shells ... and far down, over long, still fields, sand dunes lying in a strange, golden magic of sunshine, with white gulls soaring over them. There was a flock of white ducks in the yard and somebody gave him a slice of bread with honey on it. He had, he remembered, felt so near his other world then ... so near that a step would have taken him into it forever. And somebody like Dr. Blythe, only younger, carried him about on his shoulder and called him Pat.

Mother was nowhere soon after that ... some people told him she had gone to heaven but Patrick believed she had just stepped into his other world. Uncle Stephen had told him she was dead ... Patrick did not know what that meant ... and had said he didn't like squalling brats. So Patrick had not cried much except when he was in bed at night.

He did not cry now. In fact, he felt no inclination to cry, which perhaps was why the housekeeper said he was the most unfeeling child she had ever known. But he wished he had a dog. Uncle Stephen had hated dogs and he knew Miss Sperry would never let him have one. She said dogs were insanitary. Yet they had dogs at Ingleside and Dr. Blythe was a doctor. There were dogs in his other world ... and slim little deer, racing through vast forests ... horses with shining skins and dainty hooves ... squirrels so tame, they fed from your hands ... only there were plenty of them at Ingleside ... and lions splendidly maned. And all the animals were very friendly.

And there was a little girl in a scarlet dress! Not one of the Ingleside girls, much as he liked them. He had never told even Walter about *her*. But she was always there, ready to play with him ... talk with him ... ready to stick her tongue out so saucily at him, like little Rilla out at Ingleside ... only she wasn't really a bit like Rilla.

What would Miss Sperry say if she knew about her? Likely, in a voice as cold as rain,

"Control your imagination, Patrick. It is this world with which we are concerned at present. Your answer to this multiplication sum is WRONG."

Just like that, in capitals. Just as Susan Baker would have spoken if she had been a teacher and a pupil had brought her a sum with a wrong answer.

Only Susan was not a teacher and he rather liked her except when she scolded Walter for writing poetry.

When they came back from the cemetery they all came into the library to hear Uncle Stephen's will read. Lawyer Atkins had asked them all to be present. Not that any of them had much interest in it. The money would go to Patrick. Stephen had told them so often enough. He was only their half-brother, while Patrick's father was his full brother. Still, there was the matter of a guardian. There would have to be one or more. Likely Lawyer Atkins but you could never tell, with an eccentric creature like Stephen.

Patrick watched them filing in. They had all been pretending to be crying. Aunt Melanie Hall, Uncle John Brewster and Aunt Elizabeth Brewster, Uncle Frederick Brewster and Aunt Fanny Brewster, Aunt Lilian Brewster and her cousin who lived with her, Miss Cynthia Adams. He was afraid of every one of them. They were always finding fault with him. As his eye caught Aunt Lilian's he nervously unwrapped his legs from the chair rungs.

Her very look said,
"Sit properly at once."

Strange. When he was at Ingleside Susan Baker was always scolding the children for that very thing. And he never minded her but strove to obey her.

Lawyer Atkins followed them with a paper in his hand. The tortoise-rimmed glasses on his big handsome face made Patrick think of an owl ... an owl that had pounced on a poor trembling mouse. Which did Lawyer Atkins a great injustice. He was an honest man who had had a hard time of it with his client, Stephen Brewster, and did not approve of the will at all.

Also he liked poor little Patrick and felt sorry for him. However, he cleared his throat and read the will.

It was short and to the point. Even Patrick understood it.

Oaklands was to be sold ... he was glad of that. At least, he would not have to live *there*. Lawyer Atkins was appointed his legal guardian, but Patrick was to live with an uncle or aunt until he was twenty-one when a sum of money so enormous that it had no meaning for Patrick was to be his. Only he felt sure it would be enough to buy a place like Ingleside. He was to choose for himself the relative with whom he preferred to live. Having made his choice, there could be no change, unless the chosen one

died. But in order that he might know what he was doing he was first to live with each uncle and aunt for three months. When he had done this he was to make his permanent choice. The sum of two thousand a year was to be paid to the temporary guardian until Patrick was twenty-one, as compensation for his board, lodging and care generally.

Patrick desperately wrapped his legs around the chair rungs again. Aunt Lilian might look her eyes out, he thought, but he had to do something to steady his body.

He didn't want to live with any of them. If he could only go to Glen St. Mary now, and live at Ingleside! The very thought seemed like heaven. But alas, the Ingleside people were of no relation to him, except so distantly it didn't count.

And he didn't want to live with any who were. He hated the very thought ... hated it bitterly, as he knew Uncle Stephen had known very well.

Aunt Melanie Hall was a widow. She was big, capable, and patronizing. She patronized everybody. He had heard Dr. Blythe say once she would patronize God.

Uncle John Brewster always thumped him on the back and Aunt Elizabeth Brewster had such an extraordinarily long face ... long forehead, long nose, long upper lip and long chin. Patrick could never bear to look at her.

Live with that face for years and years! He just couldn't!

Uncle Frederick Brewster was a thin, beaten little man of no importance. But Aunt Fanny was every inch an aunt. He had heard Uncle Stephen say she wore the breeches ... a favourite expression of Susan Baker's at Ingleside also. Patrick didn't know what it meant ... but he did know he didn't want to live with Aunt Fanny.

Aunt Lilian was not married and neither was Cynthia Adams. They pretended not to care but Patrick knew somehow that they *did* care. Susan Baker, now, was honest about it. She always admitted frankly that she would have liked to have been married.

Uncle Stephen would never see Aunt Lilian and Cynthia Adams at the same time.

"I can stand only one old maid at once," he used to say.

Patrick thought that even one old maid, at least one like Aunt Lilian, was more than he could stand. Still, Susan Baker was an old maid and he

liked her. It was all very puzzling.

“Wouldn’t you know Stephen would make a crazy will like that!” Aunt Fanny was saying in a disgusted tone. “I see Dr. Blythe is one of the witnesses. I shouldn’t wonder if he put him up to it.”

She was thinking,

“I should have him. He should live with other children. He always seemed so different for a while after he came back from one of those Ingleside visits. I never cared for either Dr. Blythe or his wife ... but they have a family ... and Patrick never seemed so odd for a while. Not so odd and unchildlike. But I suppose he won’t choose me ... I’ve always felt he never liked me. I suppose Stephen poisoned his mind against me. Still ... there’s the three months ... it might be possible to win his affection if we were all very nice to him. That two thousand ... it would take care of the boys’ education ... otherwise I don’t see how we can ever manage it. And Frederick and I could have a holiday. I wish I’d made more of him ... but he’s always been such a strange, shy child ... more like that little Walter Blythe at Ingleside than any of his own kin. And I know I’ll have trouble with the boys ... they do love to tease ... I don’t seem to have any influence over them. Ah, children are not what they were in *my* young days. They listened to their parents *then*.”

“It would provide for Amy’s wedding,” Aunt Elizabeth was thinking. “He’ll never be happy with those awful boys of Fanny’s. They are really young demons. And the very idea of an old maid like Lilian having him is laughable. That chinchilla cape ... Fanny couldn’t put on any more airs about her moleskin coat. I saw the most marvellous lace tablecloth at Moore and Stebbins’. Of course I know Patrick doesn’t like me ... Stephen knew it, too ... but in three months ...”

“He should come to *me*,” thought Aunt Lilian. “Stephen knew that perfectly well. I need the money more than any of them. I’m tired of scrimping and pinching. And if I had money perhaps George Imlay ... of course it’s rather dreadful to think of having a boy in the house, especially when he begins to grow up. And he’s frightened of me ... he’s never tried to hide that ... but in three months ... only Cynthia is so very uncertain. She may pretend to like him ... but he’ll be sure to see through her ... I don’t see how anyone can really like children anyhow. They may pretend to ... that Mrs. Dr. Blythe makes me sick ...”

“Well, we’ll all start from scratch,” said Uncle John, with his great hearty guffaw that always startled Patrick. It was not a laugh ... just a guffaw. He thumped Patrick’s thin little back with his large, fat hand.

Patrick didn’t like fat hands.

“Which one of us are you going to pick for first go, my boy?”

Patrick wasn’t doing any picking. He looked from one to the other of them with the gaze of a trapped animal in his big grey eyes under their level brows. Aunt Lilian wondered if he were really half-witted. Some people said that Walter Blythe was ... but there was no relationship except a very distant cousinship and she remembered the time she had hinted such a thing to Susan Baker ...

“What’s to be done?” asked Uncle Frederick feebly.

“We’d better draw lots,” said Aunt Melanie briskly. “That will be the fairest way ... in fact the only way ... if anything about this whole business is fair. Lawyer Atkins, I am surprised you didn’t advise Stephen ...”

“Mr. Brewster was not a man who was fond of taking advice,” said Lawyer Atkins dryly. They all knew that as well as he did.

“I’m sure somebody put the idea into his head. Dr. Blythe ...”

“Dr. Blythe happened to call that day and I asked him to be a witness. That is all *he* had to do with it.”

“Well, luckily we all live close together, so there’ll be no trouble about changing his school every three months.”

So he would be going to school! Patrick rather liked this idea. Anything would be better than Miss Sperry. And the Ingleside boys went to school and thought it lots of fun. At least, he knew Jem did. He was not quite so sure about Walter.

“Poor lamb!” said Aunt Lilian sentimentally.

That finished Patrick. He got himself out of the room. Let them draw their lots! He didn’t care who got him first or last or in between.

And yet a sudden memory came to him of the time he had cut his finger at Ingleside and Susan Baker had said, “Poor lamb!”

He had liked it. Oh, things were very puzzling in this queer world.

“A problem child decidedly,” said Aunt Elizabeth. “But it is our duty ...”

“Oh, no, *I* wouldn’t call him a problem child,” said Aunt Fanny, who made it a rule never to agree with Elizabeth. “A little odd ... unchildlike, you might say. Is it any wonder ... living with Stephen? And his mother ...”

no family ... no background ... But Patrick would soon become quite normal if he lived with other children ... and get over that nonsense of his about the other world.”

“What other world? I’m sure Stephen ...”

“Oh, *I* don’t know. Just one of his silly fancies. Miss Sperry found out about it somehow. She’s a gimlet, that woman. *I* think she overheard Patrick and Walter Blythe talking about it. I never did approve of Stephen’s intimacy with that family. But he would never listen to me, of course. Miss Sperry was worried about it. I told her not to mind ... he would outgrow it. So few people understand the child mind. You’d think to hear Mrs. Dr. Galbraith ...”

“Oh, we all know she is a little off when it comes to bringing up children ... though I will say that since her marriage ...”

“Come, come, we’re not getting anywhere,” boomed Uncle John.

“That was just what Stephen wanted,” said Aunt Fanny. “He thought he’d set us all fighting. *I* know his mind. Well, since we have to go through this absurd performance ...”

“How else could we settle it?” asked Aunt Lilian.

“I am not going to quarrel with you, Lilian. We are each to have him three months ... so much is perfectly clear. After that, it is up to him to make his choice ... he will have to make it, whether he likes it or not. There will be no drawing of lots then.”

Patrick fell to Aunt Elizabeth for September, October, and November. He was called in ... came reluctantly ... and Aunt Elizabeth kissed him when she told him the result. He didn’t like her kiss because he didn’t like her. Yet he had always liked Mrs. Blythe’s kisses.

When he was taken to Aunt Elizabeth’s house ... leaving Oaklands with no sense of regret whatever ... his Cousin Amy kissed him, too. Amy was a very grown-up young lady, with blood-red fingernails. He remembered how Dr. Blythe laughed at painted fingernails.

Patrick didn’t like Amy either. What was the matter with him when he didn’t like his relations? The Ingleside children seemed to be so fond of all theirs. But he did not see much of Amy nor of his Cousin Oscar either, who never said anything to him except, “Hello, kid!” when they happened to meet, and always seemed sulky about something.

Neither, to his relief, did he see a great deal of Aunt Elizabeth. She was always so busy, arranging club bridges, giving and attending all sorts of social functions. Mealtimes were almost the only times he saw her, when her long face spoiled what little appetite he had and her never-forgotten kiss took away the rest. If only she wouldn't kiss him!

But they were all exceedingly kind to him. He felt that they worked very hard being kind to him. Every wish would have been gratified if he had ever expressed any wishes. He did only once.

On a Saturday afternoon in October he timidly asked Aunt Elizabeth if he might go for a ride on the bus. Just a short teeny-weeny ride.

Aunt Elizabeth was so horrified that her long face grew longer than ever ... something Patrick had not believed possible.

"Darling, you wouldn't like it at all. Any time you want a drive Amy or Oscar or I will take you in the car anywhere you want to go ... anywhere."

But it appeared that Patrick didn't want to go anywhere ... unless it was to Glen St. Mary and he knew very well he would not be allowed to go there. Aunt Elizabeth did not like the Blythes.

Patrick never spoke about the bus again. They showered gifts on him, very few of which he wanted. Uncle John boomed at him and thumped him and gave him candy every day. Uncle John really thought this must be a pleasant change for a boy after living for years with that sardonic nut, Stephen. *He*, John Brewster, knew how to handle boys. He didn't know that Patrick didn't care much for candy and gave most of it away to the laundress for her children.

Uncle John drove him to school in the mornings, joking him about something all the way. Most of the jokes Patrick couldn't understand at all. Amy or Aunt Elizabeth called for him at night. He did not make many friends at school. Aunt Fanny's boys went to the same school and they told everybody he was a sissy. The other boys took to calling him Missy. But he preferred the school to Miss Sperry.

At home ... that is, in Aunt Elizabeth's house ... Patrick never thought of it as home somehow ... he spent much of his time curled up on a window seat on the stair landing. Through a gap in the houses he could see a distant hill with violet-grey woods about it.

There was a house on it ... a house that seemed lifted above everything. Patrick often wondered who lived there. He knew it could not be the

Ingleside people; he knew Glen St. Mary must be much further away than that. But there was something about it that vaguely reminded him of Ingleside, he could not tell just what.

When late November came and the cold kiss of the snowflakes was on the window he looked across the wintry roofs in the early dusk to that house, from which a star now shone through the wild, white weather and thought that perhaps it was in his other world.

Perhaps the little girl in the scarlet dress lived there. As long as he could see the light shining to him across the far distance he did not feel so lonely ... so unwanted.

Because none of them really wanted him. It was only the money they wanted. Patrick could not have told you how he knew that but know it he did.

"I'm afraid I'll never be able to understand him," sighed Aunt Elizabeth to Uncle John ... who was quite sure he understood Patrick perfectly. He had been a boy himself once and all boys were alike ... except that queer Walter Blythe at Glen St. Mary and Uncle John did not think he was "all there." A boy who wrote poetry! He sympathized heartily with Susan Baker, who had once told him of her anxiety about Walter. But the doctor and his wife did not seem to be worried. And Dr. Galbraith only laughed. But then *his* wife was nuts, too. Elizabeth might have her faults but at least she did not pester him with theories on the bringing up of children.

"I'm afraid I'll never be able to understand him," went on Elizabeth.

"I'll bet he'll like us better than Fan's boys," said Uncle John, who never had the least doubt that they would be the chosen ones in the end.

"We've done *everything* but we can't thaw him."

"Oh, well, some boys are like that ... naturally quiet."

"But he just seems to draw into a shell. Amy says he makes her nervous."

"It doesn't take much to do that," said Uncle John. "Now, if she were like Mrs. Dr. Blythe ..."

"I don't want to hear anything about Mrs. Blythe," said Aunt Elizabeth haughtily. "I have long been aware that she is the only perfect woman in the world in your eyes."

"Now, Elizabeth ..."

"I am not going to quarrel with you. I simply refuse to quarrel with you. I thought we were talking about Patrick."

"Well, what about Patrick? He seems quite happy and contented, I'm sure. You women are always making mountains out of molehills. You'll see he'll pick us in the end."

"His eyes aren't normal. Even you, John Brewster, must see that."

"I've never noticed anything wrong with his eyes. Why don't you take him to an oculist?"

"They seem to be looking through you ... looking for something he can't find," said Aunt Elizabeth, with one of her rare flashes of insight. "Do you really suppose he'll choose us when the time comes, John?"

"Not a doubt of it. Those boys of Fanny's will torment him to death ... and Melanie and Lilian have no earthly idea how to handle a boy. Don't worry. He'll be mighty glad to come back to us for keeps when the time comes, or I miss my guess."

Aunt Elizabeth was by no means so sure. She wished she dared ask Patrick to promise to come back to them. But somehow she dared not. There was *something* about the child ... John might be as sure as he liked but he really knew nothing about children. Why, she had had all the care of Amy and Oscar when they were little.

"Darling, if you find your cousins at Aunt Fanny's a little ... trying ... you can always come over here for a bit of peace and quiet," was as far as she dared go.

"Oh, I don't think I'll mind them," was all that Patrick said.

They would have to be pretty bad, he thought, to drive him back to Aunt Elizabeth's. If only he could go to Glen St. Mary for a visit first!

But everybody vetoed that, although Mrs. Blythe had sent a most cordial invitation. Nobody in the Brewster clan, it seemed, approved of the Blythes. Patrick often wondered why but he never dared ask any questions about it.

Aunt Fanny's boys *were* pretty bad. They teased the life out of him ... on the sly, when Aunt Fanny and Uncle Frederick were not about. Yet they pretended to be very polite to him ... "because you have to be polite to girls," said Joe.

When Bill broke Aunt Fanny's Chinese teacup ... the five-clawed dragon one that had been part of the loot of the Summer Palace, so she claimed ...

Bill told his mother coolly that Patrick had broken it. Patrick got off with a very mild rebuke whereas if Aunt Fanny had known the truth some terrible punishment would have been meted out to Bill.

“We’re always going to blame things on you because you won’t be punished,” Joe said. “Mother wants to make sure of you choosing us for keeps when the time comes. Don’t do it. She’s got the temper of the devil.”

They knew Patrick wouldn’t tell. He was not that sort, and they despised him for it. Just like those sissy boys out at Glen St. Mary. Though *they* got well scolded at times. Even Mrs. Blythe could scold, while old Susan Baker had a tongue like a file.

Patrick could do anything and there would be never a word of scolding. How they hated him for that! And they would never have believed that Patrick hated it, too. He knew if he had done those things he should be scolded for them. And he knew that Joe and Bill resented his immunity even when they took advantage of it.

He couldn’t see the house on the hill from any window in Aunt Fanny’s house and he missed it. But at least Aunt Fanny didn’t kiss him and he rather liked Uncle Frederick. Though Uncle Frederick didn’t count for much in Aunt Fanny’s house. It was a very well-run house, so people said. So well-run that it was depressing. A book out of place, a rug crooked, a sweater left lying around, were unforgivable crimes in anyone except Patrick. Patrick was not very tidy and Aunt Fanny had to put great restraint on herself. She never dreamed that Patrick saw through it, but when the time came for him to go to Aunt Lilian’s Aunt Fanny felt anything but sure that he would ever come back.

“He has had a real home here,” she told Uncle Frederick, “and I don’t believe he appreciates it at all. Such care as I have taken with his balanced meals! Even Mrs. Dr. Galbraith herself couldn’t have been more particular. Dear knows what Lilian will give him to eat! She knows nothing whatever about bringing up children.”

“He is a cheated child,” said Uncle Frederick. “He has been cheated all his life.”

Aunt Fanny paid no attention to him. And never noticed much what Frederick said. Cheated? What absurdity! The trouble was Patrick had been too much indulged all his life. Every wish fulfilled. She wished she could do for her boys what had been done for Patrick.

March and April and May were Aunt Lilian's. Aunt Lilian "my lambed" him and fussed over his clothes until Patrick thought he would go crazy. He had to go to bed at night up a gloomy stair and along a gloomy hall. There never was any light in the hall. Aunt Lilian nearly had a fit if anyone left an unnecessary bulb burning. She said she had to keep down her bills ... she was not as rich as his Uncle Stephen had been ... and she held that the light in the lower hall lighted the upper one sufficiently. Patrick was always forgetting to turn the lights off.

As for Miss Adams, she generally looked at him as if he were some kind of obnoxious black beetle and her skinny Persian cat would have nothing to do with him. Patrick tried to make friends with it because he was so hungry for any kind of a pet, but it was no use. Miss Adams had no particular motive for winning his affections. She knew quite well she would be no better off if Lilian did get him finally and she hated children.

Patrick had not been especially fond of either Uncle John or Uncle Frederick but this manless house was very terrible. Yet why need it have been? He thought he would not have been unhappy living alone with Susan Baker.

It was a bit better at Aunt Melanie's, patronizing and all as she was. For one thing, she neither kissed him nor "my lambed" him. For another, she had a dog ... a coach dog who did nice doggish things, like the dogs at Ingleside; such as rolling over in the pansy bed and bringing bones into the house. His black spots were adorable. His name was Spunk and he seemed really to like Patrick.

If Aunt Melanie had not been so constantly praising him and quoting him Patrick would have been almost contented. But he grew afraid to open his mouth because she would admiringly tell what he had said to the next caller.

And she had insisted on his sleeping in the large, airy front bedroom, when he had wanted to sleep in the little back room at the end of the hall. He slipped into it whenever he could because he could see the house on the hill from it. There it was, far away across valleys full of the palest purple shadows. Sometimes summer fogs came up into the valleys but they never reached as high as the house on the hill. It was always serenely above them, living a secret, remote life of its own. At least, that was his fancy.

Someone or other had told him it was twenty miles away ... and Glen St. Mary was only forty. Perhaps Walter could see it, too ... perhaps he wove dreams about it, too. Only there was no particular need for anyone living at Ingleside to do that.

Patrick was less unhappy at Aunt Melanie's than he had been anywhere else. Nobody said sarcastic things to him ... there were no boys to tease him. But he was not happy. Soon the time must come when he must choose with whom he must live for the next twelve years.

Day by day it drew inexorably nearer. Lawyer Atkins had already informed him of the date upon which it must be made.

And he didn't want to live with any of them. Nay, more, he hated the very thought of it. They had all been very nice to him. Too nice ... too fussy ... too overdone. An Ingleside scolding, now, would be much pleasanter.

And they had all tried slyly to poison his mind against the others, some of them doing it very skillfully, some very clumsily.

He wanted to live with someone he liked ... someone who liked him. Liked him for himself, not because he meant two thousand dollars a year for his guardian. He felt that if Uncle Stephen were alive he would be smiling over his predicament.

When Patrick's ninth birthday approached Aunt Melanie asked him how he would like to celebrate it. Patrick asked if he could go out to Glen St. Mary and spend it with the Blythes at Ingleside.

Aunt Melanie frowned. She said he had not been invited. Patrick knew that did not matter in the least but he knew he would not be allowed to go.

Then he said he would like to go for a ride on the bus. This time Aunt Melanie laughed instead of frowning and said carelessly,

"I don't think *that* would be much of a celebration, darling. Don't you think a party would be much nicer? You'd like a party, wouldn't you? And ask all the boys at school you like. You'd like a party, wouldn't you?"

Patrick knew it didn't matter whether he liked it or not. A party there would be. He wouldn't know what to do or say. Still, he supposed he could put up with it. He could even say "Thank you" for the expensive gifts his uncles and aunts would give him and which he didn't want at all.

"Can I invite Walter Blythe?" he asked.

Again Aunt Melanie frowned. She could never understand his hankering for those Blythes. They might be all right in their way but ...

"They live too far away, darling," she explained. "I don't think he would be able to come. Besides, he is only a country boy ... not the kind you will be expected to associate with a few years from now."

"He is the nicest boy I know," said Patrick indignantly.

"Our tastes change as we grow older," said Aunt Melanie indulgently. "They tell me he is a sissy ... and not over-brave into the bargain."

"That isn't true," cried Patrick indignantly. "He is nice ... *nice*. They all are. Mrs. Blythe is the nicest woman I ever knew."

"But you haven't known many women, darling," said Aunt Melanie. "Certainly Miss Sperry was a poor example. You don't mean to say that Mrs. Blythe is nicer than ... well, than me, or even Aunt Fanny or Aunt Lilian?"

Patrick felt he dared not say "yes."

On the morning of his birthday Spunk was killed by a passing truck. Aunt Melanie didn't mind much. A dog was a sort of safeguard against burglars, but one was as good as another. Besides, Spunk had been very tiresome with his bones. All the maids complained about them. And it was very mortifying to have a caller shown into the living room and see a large, well-gnawed bone reposing on the Chesterfield. Not to speak of hairs on the carpet. Aunt Melanie made up her mind she would get a Pekinese. They were so cute, with such darling faces. Patrick would love a Pekinese. Why hadn't she thought of it before?

Patrick stood by the gate in dumb misery after the body of poor Spunk had been taken away. He was seething with hot rebellion. The idea of a birthday party when the only thing he cared for in the world had been killed! It wasn't to be endured ... and he wouldn't endure it!

The bus came along ... the big red and yellow bus. Patrick felt in his pocket. He had fifty cents. He ran to the bus stop and told the driver he wanted to go as far as fifty cents would take him.

"I suppose it wouldn't go as far as Glen St. Mary?"

"Well, no, not quite," said the driver, who had a certain soft spot in his heart for boys. "That would be twenty miles further. Besides, it's on another route. But I'll tell you. It will take you as far as Westbridge. Hop on."

At first Patrick was too unhappy about Spunk to enjoy this longed-for ride. A chow and a Great Dane, trotting companionably along the road, made his heart ache worse than ever. But by and by pleasure crept in. He imagined that Walter Blythe was with him and that they talked over everything they saw.

The red road, climbing gradually upward, was beautiful. Spruce woods ... gypsy brooks ... great rolling shadows like those around Glen St. Mary ... gardens full of gay hollyhocks and perennial phlox and marigolds ... like Susan Baker's own private plot at Ingleside. And the air was so clear and sparkling. He saw something of interest in every place he passed. A big striped cat sitting on the steps of a house ... an old man painting his well house a bright yellow ... a stone wall with a door in it. A door that might ... should ... open into that Other World. He pictured what he and Walter might find there.

Riding in a bus was jolly ... just what he had expected it to be. In this one thing at least there was no disappointment. And he even laughed a little to himself when he pictured the consternation at Aunt Melanie's and the frenzied search that must even then be going on.

Then he saw it. The road had climbed until it had finally reached the top of the far hills you saw from the town.

And there it was ... unbelievably, there it was. The house he had loved so long. In spite of the fact that he had never seen it save from far away he recognized it at once. It was in a corner where two roads met. He sprang up and asked the driver to let him off. The driver did so, obligingly, in spite of the fact that he did not feel altogether easy about the boy. There was something ... well, a little odd about him ... some difference the good man could not have explained between him and other boys. When he had been on the Glen St. Mary route a boy like that used sometimes to travel on the bus ... a Walter Blythe, who gave one the same uncomfortable impression of not belonging to this world.

Patrick saw the bus roll away without any regret ... any wonderment as to how he was to get back to town. He didn't care if he never got back. Let them hunt for him until they found him. He looked about him devouringly.

There was a gate with arched rustic lettering over it ... "Sometime Farm." Sometime! What a delightful name! The house beyond was a white clapboarded one and it looked friendly. There was something about

it that reminded him of Ingleside, though Ingleside was of brick and this of lumber.

The woods that had seemed so near to it when he had looked up from the town were really quite a distance away from it but there were trees all about it ... great-armed maples and birches like slim silver ghosts, and spruces everywhere, little rows of them running along the fences. It looked just like one of the Glen St. Mary farms.

The funny thing was that when you were looking south at it, you didn't seem to be on a hill at all. Before you was a long level land of farms and orchards. It was only when you turned north and looked away down ... away over the town ... over the sea ... that you realized how very high up in the world you were.

Patrick had the strangest sensation of having seen it all before. Perhaps in that Other World that was daily becoming more real to him. Even the name seemed familiar to him.

A young man was leaning over the gate, whittling out a little wooden peg. A dog was sitting by him ... a lemon-and-white setter, with beautiful eyes. The young man was tall and lean and sunburned with bright blue eyes and a rather untidy mane of red-gold hair.

He had a smile Patrick liked ... a real smile.

"Hello, stranger," he said. "What do you think of the weather?"

His voice was as nice as everything else about him. It was, somehow, a voice you knew. Yet, as far as Patrick knew, he had never seen him before.

"The weather is all right," said Patrick.

"Meaning that it is about the only thing that is all right?" said the young man. "I am inclined to agree with you. But isn't the view something? Strangers are always raving about it. You can see twenty miles from here. You can see as far as the harbour at Glen St. Mary ... Four Winds they call it." Patrick looked eagerly in the direction indicated.

"That is where Walter Blythe lives," he said. "Do you know the Blythes?"

"Who doesn't?" said the young man. "But, apart from the weather and the view, I perceive that, like everyone else on this misbegotten planet, you have troubles of your own."

Patrick was moved to confide. It was a strange feeling. He had never before experienced it, save at Ingleside.

“Our dog Spunk was killed this morning and I just had to come away for the day. Aunt Melanie was having a birthday party for me ... but I couldn’t stay for it.”

“Of course you couldn’t! Who would expect you to? The things people do! May I ask your name, now?”

“I’m ... I’m Pat Brewster.”

He *was* Pat Brewster. He had experienced a rebirth. The young man had dropped the wooden peg and fumbled a little before he found it.

“Oh ... ah ... yes. Well, mine is Bernard Andrews ... or, if you would prefer it, Barney. How does it strike you?”

“I like it,” said Pat, who wondered why Barney was looking at him so intently. Also, why he had again that queer feeling of having seen Barney before. He was sure he couldn’t have.

After a moment the intentness faded out of Barney’s expression and the twinkle reappeared. He opened the gate.

“If you left Charlottetown on the eleven o’clock bus you must be hungry,” he said. “Won’t you come in and have a bite of dinner with us?”

“Won’t it inconvenience you?” asked Pat politely. He knew how Aunt Melanie regarded unexpected company ... no matter how sweet she was to their faces.

“Not a bit. Unexpected company never rattles us. We just put some more water in the soup.”

Pat went in joyfully. Barney dropped the new peg into the slot and turned to see Pat caressing the dog.

“Don’t pet Jiggs till after dinner, please,” said Barney, quite seriously. “He was mean. He went and ate up all the poor cat’s morning rations. He’s done it several times ... and her with seven children depending on her. If you pet him he’ll think he’s forgiven too soon. He’ll soon learn that he mustn’t do it ... he’s fond of being petted. You have to use different methods with different dogs, you know. How did you discipline Spunk?”

“He was never disciplined,” said Pat.

Barney shook his head.

“Ah, that’s a mistake. Every dog needs some disciplining ... and most of them need their own especial form. But after dinner you may pet him all you like.”

They went towards the house through a garden that had run a little wild and yet had a lovely something about it that seemed to tell of children who had once played there and played no more.

The walk was edged with geraniums and quahogs ... just like Susan Baker's garden at Ingleside. In fact, there was something curiously like Ingleside about the whole place ... and yet they were really not a bit alike. Ingleside was a rather stately brick house while this was just a common farmhouse.

In the grassy front yard was an old boat full of gay petunias and they walked on a row of smooth, worn, old stepping stones that looked as if they had been there for a hundred years. There was another house just opposite across the side road ... a friendly house, too, with a dot of scarlet in the yard.

And, coming around the house, was a long lovely line of snow-white ducks.

"I *have* been here before," cried Pat. "Long ago ... when I was very small ... I remember it ... I remember ducks just like that."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Barney composedly. "We have always kept ducks ... white ducks. And lots of people come here. We sell eggs."

Pat was so shaken by his discovery that he could hardly speak to the cat, who said "Meow" very politely to him in the porch, beside a basketful of kittens. She was a fine corpulent cat in spite of Jiggs.

"Do you happen to want a kitten?" asked Barney. "We are fond of cats here ... but eight are rather too many, even for Sometyme. Walter down at Ingleside has bespoken one, much to Susan's indignation ..."

"Oh, do you know the Ingleside people?" cried Pat, feeling that here was another link between them.

"I know the young fry very well. They come here for eggs sometimes for all it is so far away. And here's Aunt Holly," added Barney, opening the brown kitchen door. "Don't be afraid of her ... all good fellows are friends of hers." Pat wasn't in the least afraid of her. She was a frail old woman with a lined face. He liked the pleasant kindness of her eyes.

She ushered him into a little bedroom off the kitchen and left him there to wash his hands. Pat thought the bedroom was old and gentle, just like the house ... just like Aunt Holly. There was a clean, threadbare carpet on the floor and a pitcher and basin of clouded blue ware.

There was a door opening right into the garden, held back by a big pink conch shell. Now, where had he seen a pink shell like that before? Suddenly he remembered. Susan Baker at Ingleside had one at her bedroom door. She said her uncle, who had been a sailor, had brought it to her from the West Indies.

Pat thought it would be delightful to creep into that bed at night, under the gay patchwork quilt, leaving the door open so that he could see the hollyhocks and stars through it, just like they could from the sleeping porch at Ingleside. But he knew it was vain to hope it. Long before night Aunt Melanie would have found him, if she had to call out the police.

“Will you have your dinner now or wait till you get it?” demanded Barney with a grin, when Pat had returned to the kitchen, with hands scrubbed as clean as hands could be.

“I’ll have it now, please and thank you,” grinned Pat in return. It was really the first time in his life he had ever grinned, though he had been trained to smile very politely.

There did not seem to be any soup after all but there was abundance of cold ham and scalloped potatoes. Barney passed him a heaping plateful.

“I expect boys’ appetites haven’t changed much since I was a lad,” he said. “I know Susan Baker is always complaining that she can never get the Ingleside boys filled up. Girls now seem different.”

Pat discovered that he was very hungry and nothing had ever tasted so good to him. Nobody talked much ... Barney seemed absorbed in some reflections which Pat had an idea were not happy ones. Though he could not understand how anyone could live at Sometyme Farm and not be happy.

Jiggs sat beside Pat and occasionally thumped his tail placatingly on the floor. Once he went out to the porch, licked the cat’s head and returned. The time of his discipline was not yet up but Pat slipped him an occasional bit of ham while Barney pretended not to notice.

They had apple pie with thick cream for dessert. And besides all that Pat felt somehow that he was eating the very bread of life.

“How are you going to spend the afternoon, Pat?” asked Barney, when nobody could eat any more. To be sure, Aunt Holly hadn’t eaten much but she had kept pecking, and Barney didn’t seem to have as much appetite as you would expect from his inches.

“Please, may I spend it here?” said Pat.

“The word is with you,” said Barney. “I’ve got to fix the fence behind the barn. Would you like to come and help me?”

Pat knew Barney was only being polite ... there was really nothing he could do to help ... but he wanted to go.

“Think your folks won’t be worrying about you?” asked Barney. “Who do you live with ... at present, anyhow?”

Pat told him.

“Well, I’ll tell you. I’ll telephone them you are spending the afternoon at Sometyme Farm and that you’ll be back this evening,” said Barney. “How will that do?”

“I suppose it would be the best way,” said Pat dolefully. He hated the thought of going back to Aunt Melanie’s but of course he had to.

“I wish I could live here forever,” he said wistfully.

Barney ignored the wish.

“Come along,” he said, holding out his hand. Pat took it.

“I’m glad he hasn’t a fat hand,” thought Pat. “I like the feel of a nice, lean, cool hand ... like Dr. Blythe’s.”

And he liked to feel, too, that Barney liked him ... really liked him for himself. He knew somehow that he did.

Pat sat on a big mossy stone on the shady side of the spruce wood behind the barn while Barney worked at the fence. Sometimes it occurred to him that Barney hadn’t really much interest in the fence. But that must be nonsense. Anyone would be interested in such an adorable fence, built of rails ... a “snake fence,” though Pat didn’t know the name ... with all sorts of wild things growing in its corners.

A chipmunk came out of the spruce wood and chattered to him. He remembered that they had a pet chipmunk at Ingleside and that Walter wrote imaginary letters to it, of which Susan was extremely proud, although she disapproved of his poetry writing.

Far, far down the sea laughed beyond the golden dunes, just as it did at Ingleside, only so much further away. It was all just as he remembered it. The memory was becoming clearer every instant.

There were drifts of filmy cloud over the tree-tops ... and a smell of sun-warm grasses all about him. A deep, wonderful content pervaded his entire

being. He had never, even at Ingleside, imagined it possible to feel so happy.

He wanted to stay here forever. Aunt Melanie and the rest of them were millions of years ... millions of miles away. He knew that at night he would have to go back to Aunt Melanie's ugly foursquare house in town and be forgiven. But the afternoon was his. Sometime Farm was his ... it knew him as he knew it.

In the late afternoon Aunt Holly brought him out a big slice of bread, spread with butter and brown sugar. Just like Susan did at Ingleside. He was amazed to find how hungry he was again ... and how good the simple fare tasted.

Barney came and sat down beside him while he ate it.

"What does it feel like to own all those fields?" asked Pat.

"I'd know what it was like if I did own them," said Barney bitterly. "In a word ... heaven!"

He spoke so bitterly that Pat did not dare to ask any more questions. But who owned Sometime if Barney didn't? Pat felt quite certain ... though he could not have told why ... that Barney was not a hired man.

He *should* own Sometime. What was wrong?

When Pat had finished his slice of bread and sugar they went back to the yard. As they entered it Pat felt Barney's hand tighten on his own slightly.

A girl was coming across the road from the house on the other side. She had a blue scarf wound around curls that were just the colour of Rilla Blythe's at Ingleside and she had gay, hazel eyes in a fresh, wind-blown face.

She had slim golden arms and walked as if she would just as soon fly. The girls at Ingleside walked like that ... and so did Mrs. Blythe, although she was so much older. Pat thought she was just like the spicy geraniums and the fresh new bread and those faraway, golden dunes. Beside her trotted a little girl in a dress of turkey-red print.

"Why, here are Barbara Anne and the Squaw Baby!" said Barney, pretending to be surprised. Pat wondered why he pretended it. He knew quite well that Barney had seen them coming.

But Pat had caught a certain look in Barney's eyes. For his own part, he was more interested in the little girl with the red dress. He liked Rilla Blythe but she never made him feel like that. Besides, he was quite sure

Rilla would never stick her tongue out at anybody. She was too well brought up ... and what a tongue-lashing Susan Baker would have given her if she had ever caught her at it. Even Mrs. Blythe would have disapproved.

“Who have we here?” asked Barbara Anne. Her voice was like her looks ... gay and fresh. Yet Pat felt ... he could not have told why ... that it was not very far from tears.

“This is Pat Brewster,” said Barney, when they went through the side gate ... a gate that looked as if it had been used a good deal.

“You’ve heard of Patrick Brewster, of course?” said Barney carelessly.

For just a moment a queer look came into Barbara Anne’s hazel eyes. Pat had an odd feeling that she knew a good deal about him. That was impossible, of course. But had not the whole day been full of queer feelings? What did one more or less matter? Pat had almost concluded that he was in a dream.

Barbara Anne’s gay eyes ... but were they so gay after all? ... glimmered at Pat and a wide, lovely smile came over her face ... a smile like Mrs. Blythe’s. Why in the world did everything at Sometime Farm remind him of Ingleside? Really, the two places were not a bit alike, nor were the people.

But Pat felt that he had known Barbara Anne for years. He wouldn’t mind a bit if *she* called him “my lamb.” He even felt he could stand being kissed by her.

“And this is the Squaw Baby,” said Barney.

Incredible things did happen. Here was The Little Girl in Scarlet ... and she was sticking her tongue out at him! Yes, of course it was a dream. But what a lovely dream! Pat hoped it would be a long, long time before he would wake up.

“You do look like a Squaw Baby,” said Pat, before he thought. Then he was horrified. But she didn’t seem to mind. She just stuck her tongue out at him again and Barbara Anne shook her for it.

Pat was indignant. Surely if he didn’t mind nobody else need care. He thought,

“You’ve got black little eyes ... like the Indian babies up at Lennox Island ... and a flat nose and black pigtailed.”

Then he forgot he was thinking and said,

“But I like you.”

The Squaw Baby, seemingly quite unmindful of Barbara Anne’s shaking, stuck out her tongue at him again. It was such a pretty little red tongue ... as red as her lips and her dress.

She pirouetted three times on her bare toes and sat down on a big grey granite stone by the gate. Pat would have liked to sit beside her but he was too shy. So he sat on an upturned milk pail instead and they stared at each other on the sly while Barbara Anne and Barney talked ... looking at each other as if they were saying things with their eyes entirely different from what their tongues said. Pat wondered again how he knew this. But anything was possible in a dream.

They spoke low and seemed to have no idea that Pat could hear them. But Pat had amazing ears.

“I’ve decided on the western trip,” said Barbara Anne lightly.

“What’s the matter with the Hill?” asked Barney, just as lightly.

“Oh, nothing ... nothing at all.” Barbara Anne’s voice conveyed to Pat that something very terrible was the matter with it and Pat felt hotly indignant with her.

“But one gets tired of the same old place, you know.”

As if anyone could ever get tired of Sometime!

“I don’t like *you*,” said the Squaw Baby. But just then that didn’t matter. The Squaw Baby was so indignant that she gave up sticking her tongue out at him and devoted her attention to Jiggs.

“Sometime Farm *is* very dull,” said Barney.

“And living with ever so nice a brother and his wife ... even with an entirely adorable Squaw Baby thrown in ... gets a bit monotonous,” continued Barbara Anne, lifting the cat and squeezing purrs out of her. “And then when you feel you are not needed! Can the Squaw Baby have one of the kittens?”

“All of them if she wants them,” said Barney, “except of course the one I’ve promised to the Blythes.”

“You don’t mean to say they want more cats there! I thought Susan Baker ...”

“Susan doesn’t rule the roost at Ingleside, though so many people think she does. And so you’re really going west?”

Again Pat felt that some tremendous issue hung upon the answer. He tried to divert the attention of the Squaw Baby from Jiggs but entirely in vain.

“Will you be gone long?” asked Barney indifferently.

“Well, Aunt Ella wants me to stay the winter with her, anyhow.” Barbara Anne set the cat carefully down and made as if to go.

“And probably longer,” said Barney.

“Quite probably,” agreed Barbara Anne.

“In fact you think it probable you will remain there?” said Barney.

“Well, you know there are opportunities in the west,” said Barbara Anne. “Come, Squaw Baby. It’s time we were going. We’ve taken up too much of these people’s valuable time as it is.”

“I don’t want to go,” said the Squaw Baby. “I want to stay and play with Pat.”

“Well,” said Barney ... Pat, in spite of the exultation which had filled him when the Squaw Baby said that ... had another of his queer feelings that it cost Barney ... who was suddenly looking ten years older ... much more than he could afford to say that “well” so lightly. Pat had had so many queer feelings that day that he felt he must be ten years older himself ... “You’ll likely have a wonderful time. I’d miss you ... if I were going to be much longer on the Hill myself. But I’m going, too.”

An immeasurable feeling of desolation swept over Pat. For the first time he wished he might awaken. The dream had ceased to be beautiful.

Barbara Anne only said,

“Oh?”

The Squaw Baby, finding her advances thrown away, returned to Jiggs.

“Yes. The mortgage is coming home to roost at last.”

“Oh!” said Barbara Anne again. Pat wished the cat would stop purring. The sound did not seem in harmony with things at all.

“Yes. It’s a way mortgages have, you know.”

“But perhaps ...”

“No, there is no doubt of it any longer. Pursey delivered his ultimatum yesterday.”

“Oh!”

Barbara Anne’s gay eyes clouded, darkened, misted. Pat felt that if she had been alone she would have cried. But why? There were too many

mysteries in dreams. Even the Squaw Baby was full of them. Why, for instance, did she pretend to be so wrapped up in Jiggs when he, Pat, knew perfectly well that she was dying to stick her tongue out at him?

“It’s a shame ... a shame!” Barbara Anne was saying indignantly.

Why should she care? wondered Pat.

“Four generations of you at Sometyme! And after you’ve worked so hard!”

The Squaw Baby turned from Jiggs and tried to get the cat. But Pat wouldn’t let her. Perhaps if he wouldn’t she might stick her tongue out at him again.

“If you hadn’t had to spend so much money on Aunt Holly’s operations!” Barbara Anne seemed to be getting more indignant all the time. The Squaw Baby was trying to get a thistle out of one of her bare toes. Pat wished he dared offer to help her ... to hold one of those dusty sunburned little toes in his hand ... but ...

“And now she is quite well and you might catch up ... he forecloses!”

What did “foreclose” mean? The Squaw Baby had got the thistle out by herself and was gazing at the far-off sea. Pat did not think he liked such self-reliant women.

“I don’t blame Pursey,” Barney was saying. “He has been very patient really ... not a cent of interest for over two years! Even yet ... if I could show him any reasonable prospect of ever catching up ... but I never can now.”

Pat tried to wile Jiggs away from the Squaw Baby but Jiggs refused to be wiled. The fickleness of dogs! And girls! Now that it didn’t matter in the slightest to him whether she stuck her tongue out or not of course she would not do it. All right! He would show her how much he cared.

He began to whistle.

“Oh, I know when I’m beaten,” Barney was saying bitterly.

“What are you going to do?” Barbara Anne’s voice had suddenly grown very gentle.

“Oh, Aunt Holly and I won’t starve. I’ve been offered a job on a fox ranch. It’ll be enough for Auntie and I to exist on sparingly.”

“You on a fox ranch!” said Barbara Anne scorchingly.

“One must eat, you know. But I confess I don’t feel very enthusiastic over the thought of looking after caged creatures.”

The bitterness in Barney's voice was terrible. It made Pat forget even the Squaw Baby and her tongue. Yes, it was certainly time to wake up.

Barbara Anne loosened her blue scarf as if it choked her. She dropped her voice still lower but Pat still heard her. Of course in dreams you heard everything. And what on earth was she saying? Pat really did forget the Squaw Baby this time.

"If ... if you had put in your claim when Stephen Brewster died! You have just as much claim on the boy as those others in town. More ... more! They're only half-relatives. You'd have been able to pay the mortgage then ... in time. I wanted you to ... you know I wanted you to! But men will never listen to women!"

What on earth was she talking about? Dreams *were* the queerest things. The Squaw Baby had found another thistle, but just then Pat did not care a hoot if her toes were full of thistles. What did Barbara Anne know about Uncle Stephen? And what had Barney to do with him?

Barney winced. The Squaw Baby did, too ... or pretended to. Perhaps the thistle really hurt. Pat neither knew nor cared.

"I ... couldn't qualify, Barbara Anne. This old, out-of-the-way farm" ... he *couldn't* be talking of Sometyme, thought Pat ... "only a district school to attend" ... wasn't it only a district school at Ingleside, thought the dazed Pat ... "and only old Aunt Holly to look after him. It wouldn't have been fair to the kid."

"A good deal fairer than you have any notion of," said Barbara Anne indignantly. "Men are the stupidest creatures ..."

The Squaw Baby looked as if she agreed entirely with her.

"And then my pride ..."

"Oh, yes, your pride!" said Barbara Anne, so violently that even the Squaw Baby jumped and Jiggs looked around for a possible stranger dog. "You needn't tell me anything about your pride. I know all about it. You'd sacrifice anything ... anybody ... to it!"

Pat felt he ought not to let her say such things to Barney. But how could he stop her? And he *must* know what Uncle Stephen Brewster had to do with it, even if the Squaw Baby never stuck her tongue out at him again. She did not look as if she wanted to ... she was interested only in thistles. Let her be, then.

“Not quite,” said Barney. “But I’m not exactly a worm. All the Brewsters looked down on my sister when Pat’s father married her, as if she were a sort of insect. You know that as well as anybody.”

“What were the Brewsters?” asked Barbara Anne scornfully. “Everyone knows how *they* made their money. And they had nothing else to boast of. Two generations against the Andrews’ six.”

“Well, I wasn’t going to crawl to them,” said Barney stubbornly. “And anyhow, they wouldn’t have let me have him.”

“Didn’t Lawyer Atkins notify you?”

“Oh, yes ...”

“And they couldn’t have stopped him if he’d wanted to come. Lawyer Atkins is a fair man. And everybody knows about Stephen Brewster’s will.”

“He made it on purpose to mortify me,” said Barney bitterly. “He thought I’d put in my claim and the boy would laugh at me. As he would have.”

“Are you so sure of that? You ought to hear Dr. Blythe on that subject. He knows the Brewsters to the bone.”

“I’ve heard him often enough. You say everybody knows about the will. And so does everybody know that the boy was to make his own choice. Do you suppose a boy brought up at Oaklands would choose *this*?”

Barney waved his hand at the sagging gate and at the old clapboard house that needed paint so badly and at an outmoded reaper in the yard.

But to Pat he seemed to be waving at the boatload of petunias and Jiggs and the bedroom with the garden door, at the long, level meadows beyond and at an unseen school where he would be “Pat” among the boys and the Squaw Baby would be sitting where she could stick her tongue out at him whenever she wanted to. If she ever did want to again.

Pat stood up shakily and went over to Barney. He didn’t know whether he would be able to speak but he must try. There were things that had to be said and it seemed that he was the only one who could ... or would ... say them. The Squaw Baby left her thistles alone and looked after him with a peculiar expression. Jiggs wagged his tail as if he knew something was coming.

“You are my uncle,” he said, his grey eyes looking up into Barney’s blue ones ... Barney’s blue eyes that were so full of pain. How strange that he

had not before seen the pain behind the laughter!

Barney started. Could the kid have overheard them? Barbara Anne started, too. So did the Squaw Baby, but that may have been because of a very large thistle. Jiggs began wagging his tail harder than ever ... the cat seemed to purr twice as loudly ... and all the ducks started quacking at once.

“Yes,” said Barney slowly. “I’m your mother’s youngest brother. I was only a kid when she married your father. This was her old home.”

“I ... I think I must have known it,” said Pat, “though I don’t see how I could.”

“You *felt* it if you didn’t know it,” said Barbara Anne. “People so often *feel* things they can’t possibly know. I went to school with your mother. She was older than me, of course, but she was the sweetest thing.”

“I’ve often wanted to see you, Pat,” said Barney. “I saw you just once when you were five. She brought you here one day when Stephen Brewster was away.”

“I remember it,” cried Pat. “I *knew* I’d been here before.”

“But your father’s people would never let you come again,” said Barney. “And when she died ... I thought it wasn’t any use. I went to Ingleside when I heard you were there on a visit ... but I was just a day too late. You had gone ... home ...”

“Home!” said Pat. And “home” said the Squaw Baby, just for the fun of mimicking and making him take some notice of her.

Then he brushed everything aside. There was only one thing that really mattered.

“Since you are my uncle I want to live with you,” he said. “*You* wouldn’t be taking me because of the money I brought, would you?”

“I’d be glad to have you if you hadn’t a cent,” said Barney honestly.

“You’d just take me because I am *me*?” said Pat.

“Yes. But I’m going to be honest with you, Pat. The money would mean an awful lot to me.”

“It would mean ... Sometime Farm,” said Pat shrewdly.

“Yes.”

“And you’ll scold me when I deserve it?”

“If I’m allowed to,” said Barney, with a peculiar glance at Barbara Anne ... who wouldn’t look at him but seemed completely taken up with Jiggs.

The Squaw Baby was still occupied with her thistles. Pat was puzzled. Who would or would not “allow” him to be scolded? Surely Aunt Holly wouldn’t interfere. But the great question was not settled yet.

“I *must* live with you,” he said determinedly. “I can, you know. I can choose the one I’m to live with.”

Yes, Bernard Andrews knew. And he knew that there would be a heck of a time. But he knew Lawyer Atkins was an honest man and didn’t like any of the Brewsters.

And he knew, looking into Pat’s pleading eyes, that it was not a matter of legal guardianship ... or of two thousand a year ... no, not even a matter of Barbara Anne, who was listening with all her ears while she pretended to play with Jiggs ... but of two souls who belonged to each other and a child who had a right to love and be loved.

“Could you be happy here, Pat?”

“Happy? Here?”

Pat looked at the Sometyme farmhouse ... at Barbara Anne and at the Squaw Baby, who at once stuck her tongue out at him and seemed to forget all about thistles.

“Oh, Uncle Barney! Uncle Barney!”

“What do you say, Barbara Anne?” asked Barney.

“I’m sure it’s no business of mine,” said Barbara Anne. Of course it wasn’t, thought Pat ... and wondered why Barney suddenly laughed ... real laughter ... young, hopeful laughter. So unlike the laughter Pat had already heard from him.

And Barbara Anne laughed, too. She pretended it was at the antics of the Squaw Baby but somehow Pat knew it wasn’t. Whatever she was laughing at, it was the same thing that made Barney laugh. The Squaw Baby laughed, too, just because everybody else was laughing, and stuck out her tongue. Pat decided that the next time she did it he would do something ... he didn’t know what but something. Girls needn’t think they could do anything they liked with their tongues just because they were girls. No, sir!

What a lovely colour was flooding Barbara Anne’s cheeks. What a pity she was going away! Pat felt that he would like to have her round. But at least she wasn’t going to take the Squaw Baby. And why, oh why, didn’t Barney answer his question? After all, that was the only important thing.

“Miracles do happen it seems,” Barney said at last. “Well, here’s looking at you, Pat. There’ll be a jolly old fight ...”

“Why need there be any fight?” asked Pat. “They’ll all be glad to get rid of me. None of them like me.”

“Perhaps not ... but they like ... however, never mind that. You and I are the same breed, it seems. Sometime is ready for you.”

Pat sat down on the pail again. He knew his legs wouldn’t have borne him up another minute. He couldn’t understand what Barney meant about a fight but he knew Barney would win. And what was the matter with Barbara Anne? Surely she couldn’t be crying.

He was glad when the Squaw Baby stuck her tongue out at him. It made things more real. After all, it couldn’t be ...

“This isn’t a dream, is it?” he asked anxiously.

“No, though it seems like one to me,” said Barney. “It’s all real enough. You were right, Barbara Anne. I should have claimed him long ago.”

“Miracles do happen!” mimicked Barbara Anne. “A man owning up that he was wrong!”

She *was* crying ... there were real tears in her eyes. Grown-up people *were* funny. And he couldn’t understand why the Squaw Baby’s tongue wasn’t completely worn out at the roots. But he wasn’t going to allow her to keep on sticking it out at him. Though he didn’t exactly see how he was going to stop her. And suppose she began sticking it out at some other boy! Well, he just wouldn’t have that, that was all.

Then he suddenly remembered his manners. And grasped at them wildly. He must not make a bad impression on Uncle Barney. *Uncle* Barney! What a delicious sound that had! So different from Uncle Stephen or Uncle John or even Uncle Frederick.

“Thank you, Uncle Barney,” he said. “It’s awfully good of you to take me in.”

“Awfully,” agreed Barney. He was laughing again ... and Barbara Anne was laughing through her tears. Even the Squaw Baby ... what was her name anyhow? He must find out as soon as possible. She would never let a stranger call her Squaw Baby. And what would he call Barbara Anne? Not that it mattered. She was going away. Was that why she was crying?

“I ... I wish ... I wish you weren’t going west,” he said politely. He did wish it, too, with all his heart.

“Oh!” Barney laughed again. Long, low, infectious laughter. Pat felt it would make anybody laugh. Even Uncle Stephen. Or Miss Cynthia Adams. Which, Pat felt, would be the biggest miracle of all this miraculous day. What a birthday it had been!

Pat felt, when he heard Barney laughing, that if he heard such laughter often he would be laughing, too. Like they did at Ingleside. Pat had often wondered at the laughter there. Why, even the doctor and Mrs. Blythe laughed as much as anybody. He had even heard Susan Baker laughing. He would be able to go to Ingleside often now, he felt sure. Perhaps Walter could come now and then and visit him at Sometyme. Pat got the impression that, although he lived so far away, Dr. Blythe was Aunt Holly’s doctor.

At any rate, he would no longer be cheated out of laughter. It had always seemed to irritate Uncle Stephen when he laughed. And had he ever heard any real laughter at Aunt Fanny’s or Aunt Melanie’s or Aunt Lilian’s? Well, perhaps the boys at Aunt Fanny’s laughed ... but it was not the same kind of laughter as the Ingleside laughter or the Sometyme laughter. Pat suddenly realized what a difference there was in laughter. Sometimes you laughed just because you felt like laughing. Sometimes because other people laughed and you felt you ought to join in. All at once he laughed at the Squaw Baby. He laughed because he wanted to.

“What are you laughing at?” she demanded.

“At your tongue,” said Pat, amazed at himself.

“If you laugh at my tongue I’ll smack you on the jaw,” said the Squaw Baby.

“Don’t let me hear you talking like that,” said Barbara Anne.

“They talk like that in school,” said the Squaw Baby, looking a little ashamed of herself nevertheless.

“*You* are not to talk that way no matter what they do in school,” said Barbara Anne. “Remember you’re a lady.”

“Why can’t ladies talk like men?” demanded the Squaw Baby. But Barbara Anne gave no answer. She was listening to Barney very intently. And *what* was Barney saying?

“Oh,” said Barney, still laughing, “Barbara Anne won’t be going west now.”

“Where will she be going?” asked Pat.

“Ah, that is the question. Where will you be going, Barbara Anne?”

Barbara Anne’s face was very red.

“I ... might move across the road,” she said. “What do you think of that idea, Barney?”

“I think it is a very good one,” said Barney.

“Since you honour me by asking my advice,” said Barbara Anne saucily, “I ... think I will take it ... for once.”

Pat had a feeling that both Barney and Barbara Anne wished he and the Squaw Baby were miles away. And, strangely enough, he did not resent it.

But there was one thing he *must* find out first. Then he would ask the Squaw Baby if she would like to go and see the kittens.

“Where is Barbara Anne going?” he persisted. “There is no place across the road but Sometime.”

Both Barney and Barbara fairly shouted with laughter.

“We’ll have to let her live here ... with us ... at Sometime, I suppose,” said Barney. “Would you be willing to have her here?”

“I’d love it,” said Pat gravely. “Will the Squaw Baby come, too?”

“I’m afraid her father and mother would not want to give her up,” said Barney. “But I think you will see enough of her for all that ... too much perhaps.”

“Nonsense!” said Pat.

He had never dared to say “nonsense” to anyone in his life before. But one could say things at Sometime. And what was the Squaw Baby saying?

“Let’s go and have a look at the kittens,” she said. “Perhaps mamma will let me have one though Walter Blythe has been promised the prettiest. I don’t like Walter Blythe, do you?”

“Why don’t you like him?” asked Pat, feeling that he loved Walter Blythe with all his heart.

“He doesn’t care whether I stick my tongue out at him or not,” said the Squaw Baby.

They went to see the kittens, leaving Barney and Barbara Anne looking at each other ... at least as long as they were in sight.

“What a fight you’ll have with the Brewsters!” said Barbara Anne.

“I can fight the whole world and lick it now,” said Barney.

Fool's Errand

Lincoln Burns had put up a sign at his road gate, telling people they were welcome to an apple from his big orchard. That showed you the kind of man he was, as Anne Blythe said.

And everybody agreed he had been good to his mother. Not many sons would have put up with her as patiently as he had. He had waited on her for years and done most of the housework into the bargain, for no "girl" would ever stay long ... couldn't stand the old lady's tongue. But then he had always been easygoing ... "the late Lincoln Burns" as he was called, because he was never on time for anything, and had an amiable habit of ambling into church just as the sermon was over. He had never been known to be "put out" over anything. Hadn't enough snap to get mad, Susan Baker of Ingleside used to say.

And now Mrs. Burns had died ... to the surprise of everybody. One really couldn't expect her to do anything so decisive as dying. For the last ten years she had hung between life and death, a peevish, unreasonable, fretful invalid. People said Dr. Blythe must have made a fortune out of her.

Now she was lying in state in the old parlour, while the white flakes of a late, unseasonable spring snow shower were coming softly down outside, veiling with misty loveliness the unlovely landscape of early spring. Their beauty pleased Lincoln, who liked things like that. He was feeling very lonely, although few except Dr. and Mrs. Blythe would have believed it. Everybody, including his mother, thought this death would have been a relief to him.

"You'll soon be shed of the trouble I'm making you, as Susan Baker says," she said to him the night before she died, as she had said it off and

on for ten years ... and as Susan Baker had never said ... “Knowing the creature all too well, Mrs. Dr. dear,” she said, “she’ll live to ninety.”

But Susan was wrong. And Lincoln was glad he had said, “Now, ma, you know I don’t think it any trouble to do anything I can for you.”

Yes, he realized that he was going to be very lonely. Ma had given a sort of meaning and purpose to his life: now that she was gone he felt frightfully adrift and rudderless. And Helen would be at him soon to get married ... he knew she would. Ma had protected him from Helen although she had always pretended to think that he was wild to get married.

“You’re just waiting till I’m dead to do it,” she used to reproach him.

It was quite useless for Lincoln to assure her earnestly that he had no intention of marrying.

“Who’d have an old bachelor like me?” he used to say, trying to be jocular.

“There’s lots would jump at you,” snapped Mrs. Burns. “And when I’m gone one of them will pounce on you. Dr. Blythe has changed my medicine again. Sometimes I think he’s longing to get me off his hands ... and maybe get Susan Baker off, too. They say Mrs. Blythe is a renowned matchmaker.”

“I’m not young,” said Lincoln with a laugh, “but Susan Baker is a bit old for me.”

“She’s only fifteen years older. She thinks I don’t know her age but I do. And you’re so easygoing you’d marry anyone that up and asked you, jest to be rid of the trouble of refusing her. I dunno what I’ve done to ever have had such an easygoing son.”

Lincoln might have told her it was a piece of luck for her that she had. But he did not. He did not even think of it.

“Ma looks nice, don’t she?” he said to Helen, who had come in.

Mrs. Marsh had been crying ... why, nobody knew. She thought Lincoln very unfeeling because he had not cried.

“Beautiful ...” she sobbed. “Beautiful ... and so natural.”

Lincoln did not think his mother looked natural. Her face was too smooth and peaceful for that. But he thought she looked curiously young. As long as he could remember she had looked old and wrinkled and cross. For the first time he understood why his father had married her. She had

been really ill and she had really suffered. Even Susan Baker admitted that and Dr. Blythe knew it.

Lincoln sighed. Yes, life was going to be dull without ma. And difficult.

“What are you going to do now, Lincoln?” asked his sister, after the funeral was over and everybody had gone but Helen, who had stayed to get him some supper. Mrs. Blythe had offered to let Susan Baker stay and help her but Helen had as little use for Susan Baker as Susan Baker had for her. The Bakers and the Burns had never “pulled.” Besides, it was well-known that Susan Baker lamented her old maidishness. Besides, Mrs. Blythe was a well-known matchmaker. Besides, Lincoln was so easygoing.

It was the question Lincoln had been dreading. But he thought Helen might have waited a little before bringing such a matter up. But Helen was never one to put things off. There was nothing easygoing about her.

“I guess I’ll have to do as they do up in Avonlea,” he said mildly.

Helen bit.

“What do they do up in Avonlea?”

“They do the best they can,” said Lincoln, still more mildly.

“Oh, do grow up,” said Helen stiffly. “I don’t think it is decent to be joking like that before poor ma is cold in her grave.”

“I didn’t mean it for a joke,” said Lincoln. He had meant it for a snub. And it wasn’t original, either. He had heard Dr. Blythe say it more than once.

“But you never had any feeling, Lincoln. And it’s no joke the way you’re left. I don’t know of anyone you could get as housekeeper. Lincoln, you’ve just *got* to marry. You ought to have been married these ten years.”

“Who’d have come in with ma?”

“Lots would. You’ve just made ma an excuse for being too lazy to go courting. I know you, Lincoln.”

Lincoln did not think she knew him at all, in spite of relationship and neighbourhood. But then they had always taken different views of the business of living. Helen wanted to make the business prosperous. Lincoln wanted to make it beautiful. To him it did not matter so much if the wheat crop failed as long as the autumn brought asters and goldenrod.

Like other men in Mowbray Narrows he was accustomed to walk around his farm every Sunday. But it was not, as with them, to see how his roots and pastures were and how the sheep were coming on. Instead it was for

the sake of his own dear woods at the back ... little fields with young spruces all round them ... grey, windy pastures of twilight ... or a lane where shadows blew about.

“That man has the right idea of living,” Anne Blythe had once said to her husband.

“He isn’t very practical,” said Susan Baker, “but I suppose a man with a mother like his must have some consolation.”

“Lena Mills would have you,” went on Helen, “or Jen Craig ... though she is cross-eyed ... or even Sara Viles might ... she’s none too young. But you can’t afford to be particular. Just take my advice, Lincoln. Start right out and get yourself a wife. It will make a new man of you.”

“But I don’t want to be made a new man of,” protested Lincoln plaintively. “It might be inconvenient, as Dr. Blythe says.”

Helen ignored him. That was the only way to do with Lincoln. If you gave him a chance he would talk nonsense by the hour ... about his garden ... or the partridges that came every winter evening to the same maple tree and senseless things like that, instead of market prices and potato bugs.

“You must get married and that is all there is to it, Lincoln. I don’t care who it is as long as she’s respectable. You can’t go on farming and cooking your own meals. It’s made an old woman of you already. Think of the comfort of coming in tired to a good meal and a tidy house.”

Yes, Lincoln sometimes had thought of it. He admitted to himself that the idea was attractive enough. But there were other things than comfort and a tidy house, as Dr. Blythe had once warned him, when some gossip had got around.

And these things Helen knew nothing about. He remembered driving past Ingleside on a cool autumn night. A delicious odour of frying meat floated out. No doubt Susan Baker was preparing the doctor’s supper. No meal he had ever really eaten had given him as much pleasure as that odour ... that banquet of fancy.

And, as Mrs. Blythe had once said in his hearing, there was never any aftermath of satiety or indigestion. “You may tire of reality ... but you never tire of dreams,” Mrs. Blythe had said.

That night Lincoln paced up and down between his barn and his house, through the mild spring night until late. He envied Dr. Blythe.

He always liked to be out in the night ... to stand on his hill and watch the stars in a beautiful aloneness ... to pace up and down under dim stately trees that were of some kin to him ... to enjoy the beauty of darkness or the fine blue crystal of moonlight.

If he married any of the women he knew, would he be able to do this? And he was terribly afraid he would have to marry. Helen had made up her mind to it and would give him no peace. She would contrive it in some way.

Well, in a way she might be right. It might be better if he were married. But he didn't know anybody he liked well enough to bother courting. Lena Mills ... yes, she was a nice girl ... "a capable girl," as he had once heard Susan Baker call her ... Lincoln shuddered. Jen Craig was all right, too, but the Craigs were always terrible keen after the money, and one of Jen's eyes was crossed. He felt Jen would make him sell his beautiful hardwood grove and plough up his caraway-misted old orchard ... the one Mrs. Blythe admired so because she said it reminded her so much of her old home in Avonlea.

Lincoln knew he would do anything a woman insisted on his doing.

"A fine chap, that Lincoln Burns," Gilbert Blythe had said to his wife one time, "but no backbone."

"Well, Dr. dear," said Susan, "that is the way he is made and he can't help it."

Sara Viles? Oh, yes, Sara was a nice girl ... a thin, brown girl with brown eyes, very clever and sarcastic. Interesting. But he was a bit afraid of her cleverness and sarcasm. She always made him feel stupid. Mrs. Dr. Blythe was clever and could be sarcastic but Lincoln felt sure she never made the doctor feel stupid.

It all came back to the fact that he was sure nobody would ever understand him as well as he understood himself.

Yet ... it was plain Helen had made up her mind that he was to marry one of them. How was he to escape? He almost made up his mind that he would consult the doctor or Mrs. Blythe. Yet he doubted very much if even they would be a match for Helen.

Suddenly into his mind came a memory ... of a dim yesterday that everybody but he had forgotten.

He had been ten or eleven and had gone with ma on a visit to Uncle Charlie Taprell who lived at Hunter's Cove. The visit had been an agony to the shy lad. He had sat stiffly on the edge of a hard chair in an ugly room ... such an ugly room! The mantelpiece was crowded with ugly vases and the walls were covered with ugly chromos and the furniture was cluttered with ugly roses. And ma had sincerely admired everything very much.

And his three cousins, Lily and Edith and Maggie, had all sat together on the sofa and laughed at him. They were not ugly ... they were considered very pretty little girls, with round, rosy cheeks and round, bright eyes. But Lincoln did not admire them; he was afraid of them and kept his eyes resolutely fixed on a huge purple rose at his feet.

"Oh, ain't you the bashful one!" giggled Edith. "Which of us girls are you going to marry when you grow up?" asked Lily. Then they all giggled and the grown-ups roared.

"I'm going to get ma's tape measure and measure his mouth," said Maggie.

"Why don't you talk to your cousins, Lincoln?" said his mother fretfully. "They'll think you've got no manners at all."

"Maybe the cat's got his tongue," giggled Lily.

Lincoln stood up, desperate, hunted.

"I'd like to go out, ma," he said. "This place is too fine for me."

"You can go to the shore if you like," said his Aunt Sophy, who rather liked him. "Now, Catherine, what could happen to him? He ain't a baby. My girls are too fond of teasing. I often tell them so. They don't understand."

That was the matter with all the world. Nobody understood. Lincoln never changed his opinion.

He drew a long breath of relief when he got out of the house. Between it and the Cove was a grove of ragged old spruces and beyond it a field where all the buttercups in the world seemed to be blowing. Halfway through it Lincoln met her ... a little girl perhaps a year or so younger than himself ... a girl who looked at him shyly out of soft, grey-blue eyes ... the colour of the harbour on a golden-cloudy day ... but who did not laugh at him.

Lincoln, who was afraid of all little girls, did not feel in the least afraid of her. They went down to the sandshore, shyly but happily, and made sand

pies. He could not even remember whether she were pretty or not but she had a soft, sweet little voice and beautiful, slim brown hands. He found out her name was Janet and that she lived in the little white house at the other side of the spruce grove.

He had given her a blue bead and promised her that the next time he came he would bring her a West Indian shell that he had at home. He also promised that when he grew up he would come back and marry her. She had seemed quite pleased at that.

“Mind you wait for me,” Lincoln had urged. “It’ll be an awful long time before I’m grown up. You won’t get tired waiting, will you?”

She shook her head. She was not a talkative little girl. Lincoln couldn’t remember much she had said. When ma came to the buttercup field and called him from there he had left her, stirring her pebble raisins into her big sand pie. He had looked back before a sand dune hid her from his sight and waved his hand to her.

He had never seen her since. She would be middle-aged and married now, of course. But he suddenly felt that he would like to make perfectly sure of that. And how? He did not even know her last name.

The memory of her dogged him all summer. This was curious ... he had not thought of her for years. He supposed it was Helen’s confounded mewling about marriage that had brought it all back. He did not want to marry; but he thought he would not mind very much if he could find somebody like Mrs. Dr. Blythe or ... or if he could find that little girl of the sandshore and discover she was not married.

One night, waking from a horrible dream of finding himself married to Lena and Jen and Sara all at once, with Susan Baker thrown in, he made up his mind that he would try to find out.

With a promptness very surprising in Lincoln he started off the next day, despite the fact that in a recent chat Dr. Blythe had said,

“Don’t marry till you find the right woman, Lincoln, no matter how much your female relatives nag you.”

“*You* were lucky enough to find yours in youth,” said Lincoln. “At my age it’s take what you can get.”

He got out his horse and buggy and trotted over the long miles between his place and Uncle Charlie’s with dread and a queer hope mingled in his heart. He knew that he was going on a fool’s errand but what of that?

Nobody else need know of his folly. There was nothing strange in a fellow going to see his uncle.

And he remembered Mrs. Blythe say that there were times it made one happy to be a fool. It made you feel that you were driving straight back into the past.

He had actually never been to Uncle Charlie's since that long-ago afternoon. It would be different now. His teasing cousins were married and there would be only old Uncle Charlie and Aunt Sophy. But they made him welcome. The parlour was just as ugly as ever ... Lincoln wondered how such ugliness could have lasted all these years. One would think, as Mrs. Blythe said, that God must have got tired of it long ago.

"Life can't be all beauty, Anne-girl," the doctor had said soberly. He had seen a good deal of pain and suffering. "But there's a lot of beauty in the world for all that. Think of Lover's Lane."

"And the moon coming up over the trees in the Haunted Wood," agreed Anne.

But the very sameness gave him a comfortable feeling of having really got back into the past. Luckily they had supper in the sunny old kitchen, where things were not "too fine," and Lincoln found no difficulty in talking to Uncle Charlie. He even, after many false starts, contrived to ask who lived in the quaint old white house at the other side of the spruce grove.

"The Harvey Blakes," said Uncle Charlie.

"And Janet," quavered Aunt Sophy.

"Oh, yes, Janet," said Uncle Charlie vaguely, as if Janet didn't count for much.

Lincoln found his hand trembling as he set down his cup of tea. He shook his head when Aunt Sophy passed him the cake. Nothing more for him.

"So ... Janet ... is still there?" he found himself saying.

"And likely to be," said Uncle Charlie, with the unconscious scorn men feel for all old maids.

"Janet's a lovely girl," protested Aunt Sophy.

"Too quiet," said Uncle Charlie. "Far too quiet. The boys like someone with more pep. Like Mrs. Dr. Blythe now. There's a woman for you. And I

never met her till Sophy had pneumonia last winter. She did more good than the doctor, I'll swear."

Lincoln admired Mrs. Blythe as much as anyone, but after all the years of his mother's ceaseless chatter, he felt that quietness in a woman was not a liability. He got up.

"I think I'll take a walk to the shore," he said.

He meant to go to the white house but his courage failed him. After all, what could he say? She wouldn't remember him. He would have a look at the Cove and then go home.

He went down through the field that had been a glory of buttercups so long ago and was a pasture now, dotted over with clumps of young clover. He was not surprised to see a woman standing at the end of the sandy road, looking out over the sea. Somehow, it all fitted in ... as if it had been planned ages ago. He was quite close to her before she turned.

He thought he would have known her anywhere ... the same soft, grey-blue eyes and the same beautiful hands. She looked at him a little wonderingly, as if she thought she was looking at no stranger but couldn't be quite sure.

"Is the sand pie done?" said Lincoln.

It was a crazy thing to say, of course ... but wasn't everything a little crazy today? Not quite normal anyhow. Recognition trembled into her eyes.

"Is it ... can you be ... Lincoln Burns?"

Lincoln nodded.

"So you do remember me ... and the afternoon we made sand pies here?"

Janet smiled. It made her face look strangely young and wonderful.

"Of course I remember," she said, as if it were quite impossible she should have forgotten.

They found themselves walking along the shore. They did not talk at first. Lincoln was glad. Talk was a commonplace that did not belong to this enchanted time and place. A big moon was rising over the Cove. The wind rustled in the dune grasses and the waves washed softly on the shore.

Soon they would have to turn back. The rock shore was ahead. The big light at the mouth of Four Winds Harbour was flashing.

Lincoln felt that something must be settled before they turned but he didn't know how on earth he was going to settle it. It would be absurd to

say, "Do you think you could marry me?" to a woman he had not seen for years. But it was the only thing that came into his head and presently he said it, baldly and flatly.

"Now I've done it," he thought, quaking.

Janet looked at him. In the moonlight her eyes were demure and mischievous.

"I've waited for you a long time," she said. "You promised you'd come back, you know."

Lincoln laughed. He was suddenly fearless and confident. He would not be afraid to marry Janet. She would understand why he put up that notice about the orchard and why the little fields back in the woods meant so much to him. He pulled her close to him and kissed her.

"Well, you know I'm never on time," he said. "They call me the late Lincoln Burns. But better late than never, Janet darling."

"I've got the blue bead yet," she said, "and where is the West Indian shell you promised me?"

"At home on the parlour mantel," said Lincoln, "waiting for you."

The Pot and the Kettle

Phyllis Christine opened her eyes ... very large, very dark-brown eyes that had lain all night on her creamy cheeks like silken fans ... well, if not all night at least all that was left of it after the barn dance at Glen St. Mary ... and smiled her prettiest smile at Auntie Clack, who was standing by her bed with a tray, looking just as much like a ripe, rosy apple, sound and wholesome, as she had looked in the faraway years when Christine was a little girl and “Chrissie” only to Clack.

She was Phyllis to everyone else. And how she hated it!

“Clack darling, you shouldn’t! I meant to get up. You should have called me. I really like to get up in the mornings ... the earlier the better ... though no one will ever believe me. You’d be amazed if I told you how many sunrises I’ve seen. I’d slip out, you know, and then slip back to bed again. But I don’t want or expect trays here. Dad didn’t send me here to be pampered ... he sent me here to be disciplined. You mustn’t ever do this again.”

“I dunno’s I will, lamb,” said Mrs. Claxton comfortably. “But I thought you’d be tired after that barn dance.”

Clack’s voice betrayed considerable disapproval in the intonation of the words “barn dance.” She had not thought Chrissie should go to a barn dance ... the Clarks of Ashburn had never gone to barn dances. Of course Nan and Diana Blythe would be there, though they were very young for that sort of thing. But Dr. Blythe had to curry favour with people.

The Clarks of Ashburn didn’t likely know that such things as barn dances existed ... although Clack had heard that the young people of Charlottetown had taken to attending them lately.

But Chrissie had been determined to go ... and when Chrissie was determined on a thing nobody but old Mrs. Clark could stop her ... and she not always, as Mrs. Claxton secretly reflected with concealed satisfaction.

She had not only gone but she had taken a pie with her ... to be put up at auction ... a pie she had made herself.

Chrissie could make superlative pies, though Clack hadn't the least idea where or how she had learned to make them. Clack had never heard of "domestic courses" or the battle royal between old Mrs. Clark and Chrissie over the matter.

That pie would have to be sold at auction ... such was the custom. Goodness knew what country bumpkin would have bought it and devoured it in company with Phyllis Christine Dunbar Clark ... so named after two grandmothers, both of whom would have died of horror at the very idea of a descendent of theirs eating a pie with a come-by-chance partner at a barn dance.

It would not have seemed quite so bad if Kenneth Ford had been the buyer ... or Jem Blythe. But they had to take their chance like all the rest. And everyone knew that Jem Blythe and Faith Somebody-or-other were sweet on each other ... though they were far too young for anything like that yet. It seemed that mere children were in love with each other nowadays. It wasn't so in her young days, Clack reflected with a sigh.

But old Mrs. Clark, the great-aunt of Chrissie, who had brought her up when her mother died at her birth, was still very much alive. Brought her up, indeed! Clack had her own opinion of that.

But why in the world had she let Chrissie come down to Memory for a whole month when she had never been allowed to visit her old nurse before?

It was a puzzle indeed. Old Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Claxton had hated each other very quietly and determinedly during all the years the latter had been at Ashburn ... Mrs. Clark had hated Clack because Phyllis Christine loved her best ... didn't love Mrs. Clark at all, no matter how many gifts were showered on her.

"Kissing goes by favour," Clack used to think complacently under her demure exterior. She loved Chrissie as her own child and took exquisite pleasure in calling her Chrissie because she knew old Mrs. Clark hated it

... she had hated Christine Burton, one of the dead grandmothers ... and would not stoop to admit it.

But she had power and had seen to it that there was no visiting back and forth when Polly Claxton's uncle had left her some money and a little down-country house at some out-of-the-way place named Mowbray Narrows. It had the lovely and incredible name of Memory and Polly had gone to live there, leaving the eminently correct and landscaped estate of Ashburn, situated near Charlottetown, with bitter regret over parting from her lamb mingled with satisfaction over escaping from old Mrs. Clark's thumb. She had hoped that Chrissie would be allowed to visit her but such a hope proved to be vain ... as she told herself bitterly she ought to have known. She did not even know if the cards she sent Chrissie every birthday and Christmas ever reached her.

As a matter of fact they never did. Old Mrs. Clark saw to that.

So when Chrissie arrived suddenly and unexpectedly for a whole month's sojourn, Auntie Clack was dying of curiosity about it all, amid her great joy.

But she asked no questions. When Chrissie got good and ready she would tell her: and if she never got ready, well and good. It was enough for Auntie Clack to have her motherless lamb with her again after five years separation to pet and cosset and carry up trays for. Not do it again! Indeed! She would please herself about that. If Adam Clark wanted disciplining done he could do it himself. He had never troubled himself much about Chrissie.

But Clack was firmly convinced that old Mrs. Clark was behind it all, though she could not imagine why. Anyhow, she might rule the roost at Ashburn ... and did she rule it! ... but she was not the mistress at Memory, thank God. She, Polly Claxton, was not going to further her plans, whatever they were. And yet, knowing old Mrs. Clark so well, she felt curious. She had such a knack of getting her way, do what you would. She could make Adam believe that black was white. There was something behind it all she could not understand.

Clack ... she would always be Auntie Clack to Chrissie, let old Mrs. Clark be as sarcastic as she might ... "Calling a servant aunty, indeed!" ... pulled up the blind and Chrissie ... she would always be Chrissie at Memory, never, *never* Phyllis ... raised herself on one round elbow and

looked out on a tiny river like a gleaming blue snake winding itself around a purple hill. Right below the house was a field white as snow with daisies, and the shadow of the huge maple tree that bent over the little house fell lazily across it. Far beyond were the white crests of Four Winds Harbour and a long range of sun-washed dunes and red cliffs.

Such peace and calm and beauty didn't seem real. And dad had sent her here ... though Chrissie knew very well that Aunty had put the idea into his head ... in order that the dullness of this drowsy, remote end of the world might reduce her to obedience. Chrissie smiled at the thought.

And when Chrissie smiled everybody in the world, except Adam Clark and Aunty, laid down their arms.

Even Clack thought that, after all, you couldn't say a well-conducted barn dance wasn't respectable enough and the Clarks *were* too proud and had too high a conceit of themselves. She was really thinking of old Mrs. Clark, though she would have died before she would have admitted it. Or that old Mrs. Clark would get her way somehow, whatever her motive was in sending Chrissie to Memory. For Clack knew perfectly well that it was old Mrs. Clark's doings. She had not lived with her for years for nothing. She always got her way.

She picked up the flowered daffodil chiffon that Chrissie had worn to the barn dance and hung it tenderly in the closet, secretly delighted that she could do that once more for her darling. She knew old Mrs. Clark thought girls should hang up their own dresses. Susan Baker at Ingleside had told her the Blythe girls had to. But after all, one had to admit that the Blythes were not the Clarks.

Her lamb must have looked lovely in it. With those little golden-brown curls of hers sleeking out of it and bunched behind her pretty ears.

Clack did not know ... and would be horrified to know ... that the dress had cost Adam Clark seventy dollars. It was pretty but not any prettier than those the Blythe girls wore ... and Susan Baker had told her they made all their own dresses. The only consolation Clack would have had was that it must have horrified penurious old Mrs. Clark, who thought it sinful to spend money on dresses when it should have been given to missions. Clack would have forgiven old Adam Clark anything for that.

"Clack darling! Salt-rising bread and butter ... I've never tasted any since you left ... Aunty thinks it isn't wholesome."

“Neither it is ... at least Dr. Blythe says so ...”

“You all seem to swear by Dr. Blythe around here.”

“For a man he will do,” said Clack cautiously, who would have died for any of the Ingleside family. “But a bit of salt-rising bread, once in a while, is not going to hurt anybody. Susan Baker makes it now and then and Mrs. Blythe winks at it and the doctor says, ‘What good bread this is, Susan.’ Oh, you have to learn how to manage the men!”

“And wild strawberries!”

“I picked them strawberries in the back orchard this morning. They’re fresh as fresh.”

“And Jersey cream in that lovely little old jug with the verse of poetry on it! Aunty used to want you to sell it to her, you remember?”

“When I am dead and gone, lamb, you are to have that jug. I have left it to you in my will. Don’t forget that.”

“Don’t talk about wills and death on such a morning, Clack darling. Look at those gold and purple pansies! Did you grow them yourself, Clack darling?”

“Susan Baker brought them up to me,” acknowledged Clack reluctantly. “Mrs. Blythe is a great one to grow pansies. Were her twins at the barn dance last night, Chrissie? I suppose so, though they are mere children.”

“Why, everybody was there! Why were you so opposed to my going, Clack darling?”

“I ... I thought ... I thought ...”

“You thought they were beneath the Clarks. Be honest, Clack. Or else you were afraid of Aunty.”

“I was never afraid of your aunt ... but I am quite sure she was the means of sending you here ... and she always gets her own way.”

“It wasn’t Aunty ... it was dad.”

“She put him up to it. But it is of no use to argue with you, my lamb. Are you hungry?”

“Am I hungry? I’ve had nothing to eat except a slice of pie since your incomparable supper last night. I couldn’t eat more than a slice ... whereat my partner was highly offended. Of course Kenneth Ford bought Nan Blythe’s ... I don’t know how he knew it was hers but he evidently did.”

“Susan Baker has a special way of crimping the edges of her pies,” explained Clack. “Oh, there are tricks in all trades, my lamb ... even

carpenters sometimes drive nails with a screwdriver. And mostly at a barn dance the boys know whose pie is being auctioned off. Though the Blythe girls are rather young to be going to dances ... I suppose Kenneth Ford was disappointed Rilla wasn't there. However, it is their own business ... I suppose both the Blythe girls had dozens after their pies?"

"Oh, yes, they seem very popular. Or else it was Susan's crimps. My partner couldn't have had any such an arrangement. Probably he was a stranger."

"Who bought your pie?" asked Clack, with affected carelessness, as she put shoetrees into a pair of slippers with ridiculous heels.

"A young man by the name of Don Glynne. He said he was the new gardener at Miss Merrion's."

"I heard Miss Merrion had one," said Clack, concealing her horror over Chrissie's eating a pie with a gardener. After all, a gardener was much better than some lout of a hired man. "He came about a week ago. I hear she is very well satisfied with him, so he must be some gardener, for she is awful hard to please. She has had five in a year. You know she has a place just outside Lowbridge. It is becoming celebrated for its rock and water gardens. She only came there to live a few years ago and she makes a sort of hobby of her gardens."

"So he told me. You see, he was really the only ... possible man there."

"So I would suppose," said Clack, as sarcastically as it was possible for Clack to speak. But she found herself wishing old Mrs. Clark might know of it.

"I liked him, Clack darling. I felt acquainted with him as soon as we were introduced. I liked him because he was tall and had good shoulders and sleek black hair and eyebrows that flew up at the corners with cloudy blue-black eyes under them. He was the best-looking man there except Jem Blythe. And they say he is as good as engaged to the minister's daughter."

"But that is absurd, my lamb."

"What is absurd, darling Clack? Jem Blythe being good-looking ... or his being engaged to Faith Meredith?"

"Neither. Jem is a very handsome boy and Faith Meredith will make him a very suitable wife when the time comes. After all they are only

children yet and Jem has to get through college. He is going to be a doctor like his father. I only hope he will be half as good a one.”

“How you people around here worship the Blythes! Of course they are a nice family ...”

“I should not be living today if it were not for Dr. Blythe!” said Clack.

“Then I owe him an eternal debt of gratitude. But let us return to our argument. What do you consider so absurd?”

“Why, liking a man just because he has cloudy blue-black eyes. The worst rascal I ever knew had eyes something like that. He is in jail now.”

“You couldn’t have a better reason, Clack darling. I feel sure that George has prominent, gooseberry green eyes.”

Clack tingled. She felt that she was on the verge of the secret ... the real reason why old Mrs. Clark had allowed Chrissie to come to Memory. But she remained outwardly calm.

“Who is George?” she asked, lifting the tray off Chrissie’s bed and affecting indifference.

““Who is George?” says she. To think anyone doesn’t know there is a George!”

“I know a dozen Georges,” said Clack patiently.

“Well, I might as well tell you the story now as any other time. Then you’ll know why I was sent here. That is, if you are interested, Clack. If not, there is no use boring you.”

“Oh, you know I am not bored,” said the diplomatic Clack. “And anyhow I know quite well that your aunt is behind it all.”

“I have some suspicion myself, Clack. I feel sure dad would never have thought it out for himself.”

“If your aunt is behind it you might as well give in at once,” said Clack. “She’ll get her way, never fear.”

“She shall not, Clack. She will not, Clack. Well, if you must know ... you’re not to tell even Susan Baker.”

“I don’t tell Susan Baker ... or anyone else ... secrets that belong to other people,” said Clack indignantly.

“Well, his whole name is George Fraser ... and he is the man dad and Auntie are determined I shall marry. There, you have the deadly truth at last, Clack darling.”

Polly Claxton felt more bewildered than ever.

“Then why don’t you know what colour his eyes are?”

Though as she spoke Clack remembered that *she* could not remember what colour her own husband’s eyes had been. She had an impression that they were a greyish blue.

“Because I have never seen him, darling Clack.”

“Never seen him! And yet you are going to marry him!”

“Never,” said Chrissie energetically. “And I hope I never shall see him. Though I have my qualms. You know Auntie is for getting her own way by hook or crook. And of course she has dad on her side this time.”

Yes, Clack knew very well. But why in the world did both old Mrs. Clark and Adam Clark want Chrissie to marry this George if she didn’t want to? Adam Clark usually took the side of Chrissie ... though, as Clack reflected somewhat venomously, it seldom did any good. In the end, old Mrs. Clark had her way. There must be money in the matter. Clack knew very well that Adam Clark was by no means as rich as rumour reported him.

“But she is going to find her match in me,” Chrissie was saying energetically. “I *won’t* marry George, Clack ... I simply won’t.”

“Have you fallen in love with anybody else?” asked Clack anxiously.

That would be a complication indeed. Clack knew Chrissie had the Clark will, too.

“Why do they want you to marry him? And how does it come you have never seen him?”

“Because he is only a third cousin or something. And he has always lived at the Coast. You know all the Clarks think it isn’t really proper to marry someone totally unrelated to you.”

“Yes, I know. It is a family tradition,” nodded Clack. “And how about money?”

“Oh, this George is simply rolling.”

“Ah,” thought Clack. “That explains a good many things.” But she was prudent enough not to say it.

“Well, my Great-uncle Edward died about a year ago. He was disgustingly rich.”

“There are worse things than money,” said Clack wisely. “You can do a lot of good with it.”

“I’m sure Uncle Edward never did anything good with his. He just delighted in accumulating it. But we didn’t expect to get any of his billions ... you know the old quarrel?”

Yes, Clack knew of it. Adam Clark had told her once when he had had a glass too much ... as Clack charitably put it. Old Mrs. Clark would have died before she told it to a servant.

“Well, of course, that was another moth-eaten tradition that had to be honoured. So we were all amazed, Clack, when we heard about his will. Wills are horrid things, aren’t they, Clack?”

“They generally make a lot of trouble,” said Clack, “but still how could things go along without them? And may I ask what was the matter with your Uncle Edward’s will?”

“You may ask anything you like, darling.”

“Did he leave his money to you?”

“No such good luck ... at least not exactly. He left it all to this detestable George Fraser and me if we married each other before I was twenty-one ... just another year. Did you ever, Clack darling, hear of anything more horribly, hopelessly Victorian than that? I ask you!”

“Things might be worse,” said Clack. “I’ve heard of many queer wills in my time.”

Clack hadn’t the least idea what Victorian meant but she knew Chrissie did not like the will and she did not blame her. It would not be a pleasant thing for anybody to have to marry someone they had never seen. But she understood Adam Clark and old Mrs. Clark a little more clearly now. They worshipped money, as she very well knew. Chrissie must have got her disposition from her dead mother. There wasn’t an ounce of Clark in her ... but then she had never known poverty.

It was a comfort to Clack that at least it wasn’t that she had fallen in love with anyone at the barn dance. But she was still convinced that if old Mrs. Clark wanted Chrissie to marry this unknown George Chrissie would have to do it.

“What if you don’t marry him ... or he doesn’t want to marry you?” ... though Clack could not conceive this possible. Still, he might already be in love with some other girl. Clack shuddered. It was a dreadful tangle. As for a month at Memory curing Chrissie of her obstinacy, that was sheer nonsense. No, old lady Clark had something up her sleeve.

“Then it all goes to some hospital. And of course I said I wouldn’t marry him. That was why I was banished here. Though you can’t imagine how glad I was to be banished, darling.”

“You couldn’t be any gladder than I was to have you come,” said Polly Claxton truthfully.

“And ... imagine it, Clack ... this George actually wrote father, telling him that he couldn’t get away from his business this summer but would try to come in the fall. So it seems the creature actually works.”

“Well, he is none the worse of that, darling,” said Clack wisely.

“I’m not saying he is. I like people who work. But he might have been interested enough ... however, that is beside the question. He didn’t want to come, that was all.”

“Perhaps he didn’t like the idea of marrying someone he had never seen any more than you did,” suggested Clack.

“But at least he could have come and ... and seen me ... and we could have talked the matter over. But he wouldn’t, and dad ... prompted, as I am quite as well aware as you are, Clack ... don’t deny it ... by Aunty ... conceived the idea of going to the Coast and taking me with him. Fancy, Clack darling, just fancy.”

“It was a silly idea,” conceded Clack, who thought it worse than silly.

“Being trotted out there to see if I’d do! They were so afraid those millions would slip through their fingers yet. As they will!”

“Hmm,” said Clack.

“They are afraid George might fall in love with somebody else. Perhaps he is in love with her already. Clack, I never thought of that.”

“It is quite likely,” agreed Clack. “Remember he has never seen you.”

“Perhaps that is why he couldn’t leave his horrid business to come and see me. But he could have told us. Well, if that is the case I’m even up with him for I said no and stuck to it. We had ructions.”

“I should think it likely,” said Clack, remembering her own ructions with old Mrs. Clark ... in which it was a good deal of satisfaction to recall that old Mrs. Clark had not *always* been the victor.

“You know you can never convince Aunty that anything she does not believe can be true.”

“I know it too well, darling lamb.”

“You don’t know how nice it is to be called ‘lamb’ again! Well, of course she couldn’t believe that anyone would turn down five millions.”

“It is a lot of money,” said Clack meditatively.

“Darling Clack, don’t sound so mercenary. You are not, really. Do you mean to tell me you would marry anyone you had never seen for his money?”

“No, lamb ... but I’d have a look at him first.”

“Even if he wouldn’t come to see you?”

“No ... but I’d manage it some way.”

“Clack, I believe you’ve gone over to the enemy.”

“Never, my lamb. You know me better than that. But I just wanted you to look at both sides of the question.”

“There was only one side. Well, finally I was sent here ... or rather I was given my choice of coming here or going to the Coast. I didn’t take a split second to decide. ‘You are making a mistake,’ said Aunty icily.”

“I know just how she would say it,” reflected Clack.

“‘I have a right to make my own mistakes,’ I said.”

“So have we all,” thought Clack, “but we haven’t the right to blame the consequences on somebody else. Though most of us do it,” she added honestly. Aloud ...

“And what did your aunt say?”

“Oh, just ‘Indeed!,’ like that! You know quite well how she would say it. And you know when Aunty says, ‘Indeed!,’ I usually wilt. But I didn’t wilt this time. Clack, I was so glad to get away ... and relieved.”

“For the time being,” thought Clack.

“You know I had such an uneasy feeling that Aunty always gets her way in the end.”

“So she does,” thought Clack.

“But she isn’t going to get it this time.”

“George may be very nice, my lamb.”

“Clack, he’s fat. I’m sure he’s fat. All the Georges I know are fat.”

“George Mallard is as thin as a lathe.”

“He is the exception that proves the rule then. Besides, there is a picture of him at home ... one his mother sent Aunty when a baby ... his mother had some sense ... she didn’t hold with old feuds and traditions ... he was a little fat baby, with his mouth open ...”

“But babies change so, lamb. Some of the thinnest men I know were fat dumplings when they were babies.”

“I feel quite sure George hasn’t changed. I know that he is a little fat man with a moon face. I can’t bear a pudgy man with a moon face. And who could marry a moon face, Clack?”

“Lots of women do,” said Clack. “And they are very happy with them, too. But I wish you would talk the matter over with Mrs. Blythe.”

“Clack, I told you this was to be a profound secret.”

“And of course it will as far as I am concerned, lamb. But Mrs. Blythe knows so much about men ...”

“I think you worship those Blythes, Clack. You are always quoting them.”

“I worship only my Maker,” said Clack rebukingly. “But Mrs. Blythe has made so many matches ...”

“That is no recommendation, Clack. I don’t want anyone to make a match for me.”

“Anyhow, you are not going to marry anyone you don’t want to as long as you are under *my* roof, lamb,” said Clack loyally.

She meant it. It *would* be fun to get the better of old Mrs. Clark. But had anyone ever succeeded in doing that? Clack could not recall one, except herself.

“I knew I could depend on you, Auntie Clack. And remember, not a word to the Blythes or Susan Baker.”

“As if I ever told secrets to Susan Baker! Other people’s secrets, I mean.”

“There, I’ve eaten all the berries ... they were delicious. I can’t remember when I’ve had wild strawberries before. I even licked the dish when you were retrieving my comb from the wastebasket.”

“Oh, no, you didn’t, lamb. A Clark would never do that.”

“Do you think Nan Blythe would?”

“I would think it very unlikely. She has been better brought up. Susan Baker says ...”

“Never mind what Susan Baker says. I don’t care a hoot for her opinion or the Blythes’ either. Though I do think the Blythes are a nice family ... and I wish Jem Blythe was a few years older. He won’t be fat ... and his name isn’t George.”

“What are you going to do today, my lamb?”

“Why, I’m going to *live* it, darling Clack. It is so long since I have had a chance to live a day. You know we don’t live at Ashburn ... we just exist. As for today, I’m going to town with Don in the afternoon.”

“Don! Who is Don?”

“Clack, darling, have you forgotten so soon? Why, the boy who bought my pie.”

“Not Don Glynne ... not the gardener at Miss Merrion’s?”

“Who else? There aren’t two Don Glynnes hereabouts, are there? He has got to get a sod edger and some special kind of snails for the new cement garden pool he is making for Miss Merrion.”

Clack sat down. She really had to. And she felt that she had to register a protest.

“My lamb, don’t you think you should be more ... fastidious? He’s only a gardener ... really a hired servant.”

“I’m sure he’s an excellent gardener, if all you’ve told me of Miss Merrion is true. She’s a crank, Don says, but she knows about gardens.”

“Do you call him Don?”

“Naturally, Clacky. Would you have me call a gardener ‘Mr.’? And he calls me Chrissie ... I told him my name was Christine Dunbar. Now, darling, don’t look like that ... it isn’t deceit ... it’s just protective coloration. He’d never come near me if he found out I was Adam Clark’s daughter.”

“I should think not,” said Clack, with all the dignity she could muster.

“And he thinks I’m your niece ... I called you Aunty, you see. You are not ashamed of having me for a niece, are you?”

“Lamb,” said Clack reproachfully.

“And I *think* he got the impression, Clack ... I didn’t tell him ... I really didn’t ... that I was a nursery governess back in town. I only said that the life of a nursery governess was rather dull and hard.”

“I’m sure Mrs. Blythe would never allow any of her girls to go riding with a ... a servant.”

“Clack, if you quote any of the Blythes to me again ... I’ll throw something at you. And he gave my pie a word of praise ... so I am not the only deceitful person in the world. And tonight we are going for a moonlit swim down at Four Winds Harbour. Don’t look like that, darling. There

will be a whole lot of others there. Don't worry, dearest of Clacks. This is just a bit of adventure. There isn't any danger of my falling in love with Miss Merrion's gardener, if that is what you are afraid of."

"It isn't. You couldn't forget you are a Clark of Ashburn."

"Oh, couldn't I! You've no idea how easy it would be. You don't know how tired I am of being a Clark of Ashburn. But still I'll not fall in love with Don Glynne in spite of his cloudy blue eyes."

"But what of *him*?"

Clack felt she had a very good argument there.

"Oh, he won't fall in love with me. He struck me as being a very level-headed, self-sufficient young man out for a little amusement in a dull summer. Besides ... the men can look out for themselves, can't they, Clack?"

Clack, having always preached this very doctrine, could not deny that Chrissie's argument was reasonable, but still ...

"Running around with common people, my lamb ..."

"He is more intelligent than most of the young men I know back home. *He* would not have refused to come east to see what kind of a wife his great-uncle had picked out for him. He would have packed a grip and taken the first train."

"How do you know he would ... or could, lamb?"

"Wait till you see his eyes, Clack. You can always read a man's character by his eyes."

"Not always, lamb," murmured Clack. "One of the best men I ever knew had what you call gooseberry green eyes ... and they bulged besides."

"Well, I told you there were always exceptions. Clack, am I a spoiled baggage?"

"Of course you are not," said Clack indignantly.

"Aunty says I am. And so does dad. Might as well have the game as the name. Besides, in the end I suppose I will really marry this George."

"You'd never marry a man you didn't love, lamb."

"Well, we've always been a bit pinched for money, according to our standards of living, in spite of our Clarkism, and it's not nice, Clack ... it really isn't."

"It's better than marrying a man with gooseberry green eyes," said Clack, swinging around easily.

“Oh, he may not have gooseberry eyes ... he may be as handsome as a god. Auntie told me once I wasn’t capable of anything but tissue paper emotions.”

“Then she told a fib,” said Clack indignantly.

“Well, it may be true, Clack. You are biased in my favour, you know. Anyhow, if it is true I might as well make the best market I can.”

“I don’t like to hear you talk like that, lamb,” said Clack uncomfortably. “It doesn’t sound like you.”

“That, as I’ve told you, darling, is because you have idealized me. I’m really just like other girls ... and I am full of Clark contrariness. If dad and Auntie had been opposed to the marriage I’d have been all for it. Anyhow, I’ve got this free, wonderful month before I have to decide, so don’t spoil it, Clackest of Clacks.”

“You were born that way,” said Clack resignedly. Apparently she washed her hands of things. Anyway, she knew Chrissie would do as she wanted to ... with everyone except old Mrs. Clark.

She had to go on washing her hands. There didn’t seem anything else she could do.

It wasn’t any use talking to Chrissie. She had even to snub poor Susan Baker who ventured to hint that it wasn’t quite the thing for a Clark of Ashburn to be running everywhere with Miss Merrion’s gardener.

Besides, she could not help liking Don Glynne himself, hard as she tried to hate him. He was very likeable and his eyes did things to you. Even when he wore overalls. For it was in overalls and the rackety Ford Miss Merrion kept for her hired help that he came to take Chrissie to town that afternoon.

Clack could only stand up to it by picturing old Mrs. Clark’s face, if she could have seen them as they whirled away, Chrissie cool and delicious in blue linen beside the faded overalls.

“Do you like me as well today as you did last night?” Don was asking, rather impudently.

The appalling thing was that she did, in spite of all the nonsense she had talked to Clack. She had thought the magic of the night before would vanish in broad daylight.

But he seemed even nicer in his overalls than in his party togs. As for magic ... why, magic seemed everywhere. It spilled all around them as they

tore through the golden afternoon in the open car.

Chrissie's curls blew back from her little face and stars came into her eyes. A cluster of roses from some part of Miss Merrion's garden lay on her lap and their perfume seemed to go to her head.

Don Glynne hadn't believed she could be as pretty as he had thought her at the dance ... and she was even prettier. They drove to town and Don got his sod edger and ordered his special snails for the water garden and then they drove home more slowly by a winding woodsy road under dark spruces. Don told her he liked his work and loved gardens.

"Some day I'm going to have a garden of my own ... a secret garden that very few people will ever see ... or criticize ... or admire."

"Why?"

"Because they always admire the wrong things. The only people who have admired the right things in Miss Merrion's gardens since I've been there were Dr. Blythe and his wife. They *did* seem to understand."

Again Chrissie's heart was torn by a pang of jealousy.

"Won't you let anybody see it?" she asked wistfully. "I mean ... anybody you are not sure will admire the right things?"

Don looked sidewise at her.

"Oh, I can always tell the right kind. It's a sort of instinct. But there will be no mobs. I'm fed up with sightseers at Miss Merrion's in the short time I've been there. The tourists come there in shoals ... of course they've been told Miss Merrion's gardens are one of the sights of the Island. I'd like to drown them in some of the pools. Miss Merrion likes it, though ... sometimes I think that is all she has a garden for ... for people to squeal over."

"Miss Merrion *must* love some of her flowers," said Chrissie.

"Oh, she likes a bouquet for the dining room table, especially when she has company. But she doesn't care a hoot for the garden itself. As Mrs. Blythe says, you have to work in a garden yourself or you miss its meaning."

Always those Blythes! Chrissie took the bull by the horns.

"Do you admire the Blythe family so much?"

Don looked his astonishment. "I've only been here a week, don't you know? I just met Jem at the dance last night and one day Dr. and Mrs. Blythe brought some of their friends here. But everybody speaks of them

as charming. They wouldn't look at a plain hired gardener, I suppose. Though they say Susan Baker is a member of the family. As for Miss Merrion's garden, it is a divine place, whether she really cares for it or not. Will you come over and see it some day?"

"But I might admire the wrong things, too."

"I'll take a chance on that. I believe you'll love all the right things ... and pass by the wrong things just as the Blythes did."

"I suppose it takes a great deal of money to have a garden like that?"

"Scads. But it's well spent. How could I make an honest living otherwise? And Miss Merrion is rolling in it, so they tell me. That is why she never married ... she told me she was afraid all her suitors were after her money. I daresay they were, too ... have you ever seen Miss Merrion?"

"No."

"Well, she could have been no beauty at her best and youngest."

"It must be abominable ... to be married for your money," said Chrissie hotly.

"Rotten," agreed Don. "Or to marry for money."

"M ... m ... m," said Chrissie. "Only ... do you think it is as bad in a woman as a man?"

"Just as bad in either," said Don. "Of course long ago there wasn't anything a woman could do. But now there is no excuse for her."

"But if she hasn't been brought up to do anything useful?"

"Then her parents or guardians ought to be soundly spanked," said Don. "In my mind, there is one valid reason for marrying ... genuine, earnest love."

"But sometimes people mistake infatuation for love," said Chrissie.

"Ah, that is the tragedy of life," said Don with a sigh. "It is hard to tell which is which. But if you would be willing to be poor ... horribly poor ... together, I think you might take the chance. And now we've got to get back, because I have to spray the roses before dinner. Miss Merrion is very particular about that. And a good servant must please his employer if he wants to hold his job. Do you still want to go for that evening swim?"

"Yes, of course ... if you do."

In the evening they went for the swim ... much to Clack's silent but evident disapproval.

Afterwards they sat on an old upturned dory and watched the moon make patterns on the water. The wind rustled in the dune grasses and there was a thin, silvery wash of little waves on the shore. Far up Four Winds Harbour were mists like dancing witches.

Who could suppose that Ashburn was so short a distance away? It seemed on another planet.

Dad had told her there would be nothing to look at but sunsets. Sunsets! Why, there was Don's profile to look at. And his slim, sloping shoulders and long, steel-muscled, golden-brown arms.

She thought of George's awful, plump white body in a bathing suit and shuddered.

"I wonder what would happen if I tried to hold your hand," said Don.

Nothing happened ... at least nothing that anyone could see. Chrissie shuddered again to imagine what Clack would say if she saw. As for Auntie Clark ... well, she just would not think about *that*.

But she knew that the touch of Don's fingers was sending little thrills up her arm like the waves of some delicate spirit fire. She wondered if other girls felt like that when their friends touched them. It seemed impossible. No one but Don could make anyone feel like that. And yet she had met him only the night before.

"Oh, if I only weren't a Clark!" she thought. "Well, Don is only having a little flirtation just as I am. It means nothing more to him. He thinks I am Clack's niece and a nursery governess and in his own class. I wish it hadn't been necessary to tell him those fibs. Was it necessary? Why did I care what he thought I was? Just to save the Clark pride, I suppose. And I've always laughed at it. I'm as bad as Auntie. But Don will soon forget me and Auntie and dad will find they can't marry me off just as they like and meanwhile I will have had a delicious month with darling Clack."

Clack sometimes feared Chrissie had forgotten she was a Clark in the weeks that followed. But she could only fall back on her belief that her lamb could do no wrong. She had to have some amusement, hadn't she? Mowbray Narrows was a very quiet place.

Don Glynn and Chrissie went swimming together every evening ... and soon every morning. There were no more breakfast trays. Don used to come and whistle outside her window ... which Clack thought indelicate, to say the least of it. What business had he to know which was her window?

Then they were off to the sandshore, which was all pale golden in the thin, translucent glow of the sunrise.

Clack thought it was worse going swimming in the morning than in the evening. The other young folks of Glen St. Mary and the Upper Glen and a few from Mowbray Narrows went in the evening and Clack had got resigned to it: but she could not resign herself to the morning expeditions. Nobody else went swimming in the morning ... except some of the summer colony ... but they were not Clarks. Clack's only consolation was what old Mrs. Clark would say if she knew.

But she did not know. Or did she? Clack could not lose her belief that you could not get ahead of old Mrs. Clark, no matter what you did. As for Adam, he was as easily befooled as any other man.

Sometimes Chrissie brought Don in to breakfast with her and Clack could not help being civil to him ... could not help liking him. She knew Miss Merrion said she had never had a gardener like him. One who really seemed to take an interest in his work.

After breakfast Don and Chrissie used to go into the garden and eat red currants until it was time for him to show up at Miss Merrion's, when all the other servants would be just getting up. Don declared the cook was worried because he didn't seem to be hungry some mornings.

"How could I eat two breakfasts?" he asked Clack.

He and Chrissie did a great deal of laughing and talking as they ate red currants. Clack often wondered what it was all about but she was too well-bred to listen. Old Mrs. Clark would have listened without scruple, she knew. But she was not going to imitate *her*.

They went on picnics on his afternoons off, rattling away in his old Ford to some lonely place among the hills. These picnics worried Clack more than the swimming expeditions. Now and then she warned Chrissie, who only laughed at her warnings.

"You say Aunty will be sure to get her way and if so I'll have to marry George," she would say.

"I am thinking of the poor young man," Clack would say with dignity.

So was Chrissie, although she would never have admitted it. She knew quite well that Don Glynne was in love with her and that it was the real thing. She knew she ought to break with him at once ... but, to her dismay, she found she could not do it. And yet she could never marry him.

“I couldn’t have believed the Clark pride was so strong in me,” she reflected miserably. “I’m really as bad as Aunty. Well, suppose I give them all the shock of their lives ... including Aunty Clack ... and marry Don? I *can* make him ask me to ... easily ... he thinks I am only a nursery governess. I believe I could do it anyhow. And a fig for George!”

Sometimes they dug for clams at low tide and Clack made excellent chowders ... and enjoyed seeing them eat them ... unhappy though she was. For this month, to which she had looked forward so happily, was very unhappy for her. Her only consolation was that old Mrs. Clark always got her own way.

“To think I should have come to finding comfort in that,” she reflected sadly.

Why, Don and Chrissie even went to the dances at the Walk Inn ... the summer colony dance house ... and Clack knew, through Susan Baker, that often as not they never went inside but danced alone out under the trees to the music that drifted out from the Inn, while the moonlight sifted down on them. The moons that summer were simply wonderful. At least, Don and Chrissie would have told you so. To other people they seemed much like ordinary moons.

Once poor Clack heard a wild tale from a neighbour that Chrissie had been seen helping Don mow the Merrion lawns but she refused to believe it ... or even ask Susan Baker about it.

She might as well have believed it because it was true. And whatever happened the roses had to be sprayed. Also Chrissie helped Don with his weeding and learned a good deal about gardening as well as about other things. There was no doubt that Don understood his trade. She didn’t know another thing about him ... and never tried to find out ... but she gathered that he had an uncle somewhere who was a farmer or an apple grower or something like that, and no other relatives worth mentioning.

Poor Clack was the most unhappy woman in the world just then. She tried to find out something about Don Glynne but nobody seemed to know anything about him ... not even Susan Baker. And what Susan Baker didn’t know about anybody within a radius of thirty miles was not worth knowing, as Dr. Blythe was in the habit of saying. He had even been known to accuse his wife ... good-humouredly, of course ... of listening to Susan.

“How else am I to hear the news?” Anne defended herself. “Miss Cornelia isn’t in it when it comes to Susan. And Susan says Miss Clark is flirting shamefully with that gardener of Miss Merrion’s and poor Polly Claxton is worrying herself to death.”

“Miss Claxton may spare herself her worries,” said the doctor. “Don Glynne can look out for himself. No woman is going to make a fool of him. If that Clark girl thinks she is, she is going to find herself badly mistaken. As for the rest, Anne-girl, keep your fingers out of it if you don’t want them burned. Remember your last attempt at matchmaking.”

“I shall never hear the last of that from you,” said Anne ruefully. “And I certainly am not going to make any attempt at matchmaking between Miss Clark and Don Glynne. Why, she is Adam Clark’s daughter.”

“She is none the better for that,” said Gilbert. “And here is a piece of gossip that everybody knows. Adam Clark is on the verge of bankruptcy. And his sister says his daughter is going to marry some man out west. So you may be sure there is no question of anything serious between Miss Clark and Don Glynne.”

“Girls have been known to do foolish things before now,” said Anne.

“As when you married a poor young doctor and went to live with him in a tumble-down house you persisted in calling your House of Dreams.”

“Gilbert Blythe! I told Susan to make your favourite lemon pie for dinner but now I shall tell her not to.”

“If you do ...”

“I’ll make it myself,” said Anne, with a laugh ... the old laugh that had never failed her yet. For the Great War had not come and there was no shadow on her face. As for Don Glynne and Miss Clark, they could look after themselves. Mowbray Narrows people were too far away to bother with.

Don Glynne seemed to know all about all the gardens of history and romance and legend in the world, from Eden down. He told Chrissie much about them as they weeded or picnicked or chased night moths in the orchard. Once Chrissie stumbled over a root and Don caught her. She knew he held her a little longer than was necessary ... and she knew she liked it ... and she knew that he knew she liked it. And she knew she would *never* marry George.

Which would not have comforted Clack much if she had known it. It *would* be a triumph to get the better of old Mrs. Clark for once; but she did not want Chrissie to marry Miss Merrion's gardener.

"It is no use looking forward to anything," thought poor Polly Claxton. "I looked forward to this month with Chrissie so much ... and see how it has turned out! I wonder if I ought to warn Adam Clark. But no. I will *not* play into old Mrs. Clark's hands like that. I haven't the least doubt she knows as much about it as I do anyway."

Once Chrissie heard herself referred to as "Don Glynne's girl" and was horrified to find that it thrilled her instead of annoying her. Clack heard a similar reference ... several of them in fact ... and it gave her a very bad quarter of an hour.

But after all, Chrissie was a Clark ... and Clarks didn't marry gardeners ... it was impossible ... no matter how cloudy their blue eyes or how tall and broad-shouldered their figures.

Of course, anybody could see that Don Glynne was crazy about her ... but Clack fell back on the assurance that the men ought to be able to look after themselves. The best of them, she felt, needed a lesson quite frequently.

When she saw Don offering Chrissie the quarter of an apple on the point of his garden knife one day she felt much more at ease. It was a pity such a nice fellow should have such manners. And him looking so much like a gentleman, too!

Chrissie thought the apple the most delicious she had ever tasted. She knew the knife was clean ... Don had washed it in the brook before he carved up the apple.

But it was not until Don kissed her ... for the first time ... that night on the shore ... and just for one second was the centre of her universe ... that she knew something else.

"From now on you are mine," he said, between his set teeth.

Chrissie knew there was only one way of escape ... and she took it.

"Let us be sane," she said, as lightly as wave froth in the sand. "You know this can't go on. I've liked you very much ... for the summer. But I must have a different beau for the wintertime. Really."

"So ... that is how it is?" said Don.

"You knew it, didn't you?"

"I suppose I ought to have known it," said Don.

He laughed.

"Life is a joke," he explained, "and what is a joke for but to be laughed at?"

He looked at Chrissie. She wore a silvery dress and looked like a mermaid just slipped out of the sea. She knew he thought her the loveliest thing in the world. This is one of the things a woman knows without being told.

"Suppose I just said," went on Don, "'You have got to marry me and no more nonsense about it'?"

"You wouldn't like it," said Chrissie still more frothily.

She knew by his face that she would have to tell the lie she had hoped to escape telling.

"You see ... I like you as a friend but I don't care anything about you in any other way."

"And that," said Don, "is that."

They went back through the scented moonshine in a very dreadful silence.

But at the corner of the spruce where the road branched off to Miss Merrion's Don spoke again.

"I think you were lying when you said you didn't love me. The real reason is ... you think a gardener is not good enough for a governess."

"Don't be absurd, Don."

"So many true things are absurd."

"Well, I am going to tell you the truth at last. I have been acting a lie all summer. Oh yes, I'm ashamed of it but that doesn't make matters any better now. I am not a governess. I don't know how you ever got the idea that I was."

"I think you know very well ... and I think you intended me to think you were."

"You could easily have found out by asking somebody."

"Do you think I was going to discuss you with the people around here?"

"Well, I'm not Chrissie Dunbar either ... at least, I am Phyllis Christine Dunbar Clark ... the daughter of Adam Clark of Ashburn ... though that may not mean anything to you."

“Oh, yes, it means something,” said Don, slowly and icily. “I know who Adam Clark is ... and what the Clarks are. I seem to have been nicely fooled all round. But then I am so easily fooled. I believe in people so readily. I even believed Mrs. Blythe when she told me ...”

“What did she tell you?” cried Chrissie.

“Never mind. Merely a harmless answer to a harmless question I asked her. Anyone could have told me ... it is common knowledge. It all comes back to the fact that I have been made an easy fool of. So easy. It really couldn’t have been easier, Miss Clark.”

“I am going away tomorrow,” said Chrissie coldly, her ignorance of what Mrs. Blythe could have told him still rankling in her heart. Not that it could have made any difference.

“So this is good-bye?”

“Yes.”

“Good-bye, Miss Clark.”

He was gone ... actually gone. At first she couldn’t believe it. Then she lied again in saying, “Thank Heaven.”

She went up to her room and made up her mind that she would cry till ten o’clock and then put Don Glynne out of her mind forever.

She cried for the specified time ... very softly into her pillow, so that Clack would not hear her.

Then she got up ... picked up a very hideous china cow that Clack, for some unknown reason, had always kept on the dressing table ... some unknown sweetheart of her youth had given it to her ... and threw it out of the window. It made a satisfying crash on the stones of the walk.

Chrissie felt much better.

“In about twenty years or so I’ll be pretty well over it,” she said.

In a cool green dawn Chrissie packed her trunk. She was all ready to go when an amazed Clack came in.

“I’ve stayed out my month, dearest, and now I’m going back to Ashburn. Don’t deny that, under your grief, you are feeling secretly relieved ... you’ve been worrying about Don and me. You needn’t have ... oh, if you knew how much you needn’t have! I hate Don Glynne ... hate him!”

“I wonder,” thought Clack.

Then she added, “Are you going to marry George?”

“No, I am not going to marry George. Aunty and dad may ... and will ... spill emotions and rage over everything ... but nothing will induce me to marry George.”

“I wonder,” thought Clack again.

When Phyllis ... it had to be Phyllis again ... got back to Ashburn Aunty Clark looked at her critically.

“You look very washed out, my dear. I suppose you had a deadly dull time at Memory. If you had done as your father wished this wouldn’t have happened.”

“I had a lovely time at Memory,” said Phyllis. “And such peace and quiet. And I may as well tell you, Aunty dear, that I am not going to marry George Fraser and you are not to mention his name to me again. I am not going to marry *anybody*.”

“Very well, dear,” said Aunty Clark, so meekly that Phyllis looked at her in alarm. Wasn’t the old dear feeling well?

Phyllis went to town and bought a gorgeous new dress ... a divine thing, really, of black net with rows upon rows of tiny pleated frills around the skirt and a huge red rose on its breast ... red as the roses she had helped to spray in the Merrion gardens.

She did not notice that the clerk looked a little queer when she told him to charge it.

She wore it that night to the dinner party Adam Clark was giving some important visiting Englishman and sparkled impudently all through the meal.

“My daughter has just been spending a month with her old nurse in the country,” apologized Adam Clark, who thought she was really going too far. “This is ... ahem ... her reaction against its monotony.”

Monotony! Peace and quiet! Ashburn seemed horribly dull, Phyllis reflected at her room window that night. Horribly peaceful ... horribly quiet. With a ghostly abominable moon looking down at you!

That moon would be shining somewhere on Don. What was he doing? Dancing at the Walk Inn with some other girl probably. Only remembering her with scorn and hatred because she had deceived him.

Well, did it matter? Not at all.

The Memory interlude was over. Definitely over. And George was just as definitely disposed of. Horrible, fat George!

She would never see tall, lean Don again but at least she would not have to marry pudgy George. As for Uncle Edward's millions ...

"I'd rather keep boarders to help Don out than spend millions with George," she thought violently and ridiculously.

But it was absurd to think of marrying a gardener.

Besides, she no longer had the chance of doing it. Aunty Clark and dad must have resigned themselves to her refusal of George. Neither of them had mentioned his name or the trip to the Coast since her return.

Then she heard it ... Don's whistle ... just as she had heard it so often in the mornings at Memory!

It came from the shrubbery at the back of Ashburn. Don was there ... she hadn't the least doubt of it ... hate her he might ... despise her he might ... but he was there ... calling her ... calling the heart out of her body.

Of course she had lied when she said she didn't love him. And he hadn't believed her either. Thank God he hadn't believed her. Love him! She'd show him whether she loved him or not. He might just be trying to get even with her but that didn't matter. Nothing mattered but that he was there.

And in the midst of it all how she wished she hadn't broken poor, dear Aunty Clack's china cow.

She flew downstairs and out of the side door and across the dew-wet lawn, her dress trailing in the grass. But it didn't matter about dresses. As a gardener's wife she wouldn't need dinner dresses ... or would she? Perhaps even gardeners had parties of their own. But that didn't matter either. She would be happy in a dinnerless desert with Don and wretched in Paradise without him.

They didn't say a word when they met ... not for a long time. They were otherwise occupied. And they were the only two real people in the world.

But at last ...

"So you were lying," said Don.

"Yes," said Chrissie ... always Chrissie now. Never again Phyllis. "And I think you knew it."

"After I cooled down I did," said Don. "Do you know where little girls go who tell lies?"

"Yes ... to heaven. Because that's where I am now."

"If I hadn't come what would you have done?"

“Gone back to Memory. Oh, that Englishman! He was so dull. Even gooseberry George would have been better.”

“Do you think you will ever be sorry you didn’t marry George?”

“Never.”

There was another interlude.

“I’ll always be sure of a job as a gardener,” said Don. “But how will your family feel about it?”

“They will never forgive me ... at least Aunty ... but that doesn’t matter.”

“Oh, I think they’ll forgive you,” said Don. “I’m not really worrying over their forgiveness. The question that bothers me is ... will *you* forgive me?”

“Forgive you! For what?”

“For deceiving you so shamelessly.”

“Deceiving me? What on earth do you mean?”

“Chrissie, darling, put your head down on my shoulder ... so ... and don’t look at me or say one word until I’ve finished. I’m not Don Glynne ...”

“Not Don Glynne!” gasped Chrissie, disobeying him from the beginning. “Then ... who are you?”

“Well ... at least ... my mother’s name was Glynne ... I’m ... I’m ... my whole name is George Donald Fraser ... no, keep still ... I came east to see you ... to tell you frankly I wasn’t marrying for money. I got here just as you got into the car to drive away. I saw you ... *I saw you*. Your lashes keeled me over. I decided then and there to follow you ... and I did. I ... I was lucky enough to get the job at Miss Merrion’s. I am a good gardener. It’s always been my hobby. Old Uncle Edward had the finest garden at the Coast. I took a course in gardening at the university. And I won the Premier’s cup for a bowl of roses at the Flower Show last year. Some day I’m going to have gardens that will make Miss Merrion’s seem like a cottage plot. You’ll help me weed them, won’t you, darling? No, not yet. You must forgive me ... after all, I just did what you did yourself. The pot shouldn’t hold a grudge against the kettle. *Now?*”

Chrissie snuggled a bit closer if that was possible.

“Things like this simply can’t *happen*,” she said. “They must be arranged by Providence. But it’s rather odious ... really ... to think how pleased Aunty will be!”

Don kissed her hair and the tips of her ears. He knew he was forgiven but he knew there was one thing he had not told her ... one thing he must never tell her ... one thing that she would never forgive. He must never tell her that he had gone into Ashburn after she had driven away and that the whole plot was a concoction of her aunt's, with her father's consent. Old Mrs. Clark had been a school friend of Jane Merrion's.

Clack had been quite correct on her estimate of old Mrs. Clark.

~ Part Two ~

Walter Blythe was the poet of the family at Ingleside.

His mother sympathized with his ambitions, the rest looked upon it as “Walter’s fad,” and Susan Baker disapproved of it darkly.

The First World War came. All the Blythe boys went and Walter was killed at Courcellette. He had destroyed most of his poems before going overseas but left a few with his mother.

Mrs. Blythe occasionally read some of her own verses to the family in the evenings and now she included one of Walter’s now and then, partly by way of keeping his memory keenly alive in the hearts of his brothers and sisters and partly to please Susan, who now treasured every scrap of Walter’s scribblings.

Another Ingleside Twilight

INTERLUDE

*Today a wind of dream
Blew down the raucous street,
I heard a hidden stream
Laugh somewhere at my feet.*

*I felt a mist of rain
Trembling against my face ...
I knew that wind had lain
In many a haunted place.*

*I saw a sea-beach dim
By many a silver dune,
Where sandy hollows brim
With magic of the moon.*

*I saw a shadowy ship
Upon her seaward way,
And felt upon my lip
A kiss of yesterday.*

*I walked again beside
The dark enchantress, Night,
Until the dawn's white pride
Brought back a lost delight.*

*O wind of dream, blow still,
For I would have it stay ...
That ghostly pressure sweet and chill,
That kiss of yesterday.*

Walter Blythe

JEM BLYTHE:- “I wonder if poor Walter ever kissed a girl in his life.”

FAITH MEREDITH, *quietly*:-“Yes, he kissed Una goodbye before he went away.”

RILLA BLYTHE:- “But this was written before that so it must have been a dream kiss.”

SUSAN BAKER, *sadly*:- “I remember the day he writ this, over there in the maple grove. I scolded him for wasting his time when Ian Flagg was beating him in the arithmetic exams. Oh, if I hadn’t scolded him!”

NAN BLYTHE:- “Don’t cry, Susan. We all do things we wish we hadn’t. I used to tease Walter about writing poetry, too.”

COME, LET US GO

*Friendly meadows touched with spring,
Full of shadows that run and swing,
Little white sheep on the greening hills,
Gardens that beckon with daffodils,
Gardens sweet and old and dear
Loved for many a vanished year.*

*Pine trees dim in the morning mist,
Seaside valleys of amethyst,
Gypsy breezes that purr and croon,
By noontide river or twilight dune,
And a silent place by a brackened stream
That harbours an unforgotten dream.*

*A path that is charted by silver stars
Down to the shadowy pasture bars,
Along where the moon-white birches shine
Like silver ladies all fair and fine,
To a waiting house where I'm sure I may
Live for a while in yesterday.*

*And I will catch as I softly fare,
The breath of the violets waiting there,
I will hear as I pause at the open door
The call of the waves on the ghostly shore,
And I know right well that I shall not miss
On my face the sting of the sea-wind's kiss.*

*The gentle night will be kind to me,
The ivied porch will be motherly,
By the old stone step and the sagging sill*

*The hopes of youth are lingering still,
And I shall find when that step is crossed
A secret of peace that the world has lost.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “You were thinking of the old days in Avonlea when
you wrote that, weren’t you, Anne?”

ANNE:- “Partly ... and partly of the secret of peace the world has lost.
Nothing has been the same since the war, Gilbert. Nothing will
ever be the same again.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “No. But we know our son gave his life for his country.
And we still have peace and love at Ingleside, dearest.”

A JUNE DAY

*Come, 'tis a day that was born for dreaming,
A day in June for adventurers.
We will have done with worry and scheming,
Here, where a west wind purrs;
We will forget we are tired and old,
We will forget our plots for gold,
We will just remember the little wild rose,
And the lure of a cloud that comes and goes.*

*We will just remember the nested meadow,
And the wonderful peace of the high blue skies,
The leaves' green flicker, the wood-fern's shadow,
The moths and the butterflies.
We will drive out fear and take hope instead,
We will wander just where our feet are led,
Taking no heed for roof or bar,
Till we keep an old tryst with the evening star.*

*Good-bye for a day to the bitter striving,
The fret and corrosion of desk and mart,
Ours will be gypsy honey for hiving,
And ours the childhood heart.
Ours to loiter by brooks empearled,
As if there were never a clock in the world,
Ours to march with the windy firs ...
We are June-time adventurers!*

Walter Blythe

DR. BLYTHE, *thinking*:- “Commonplace verse ... but the boy had something in him. He always seemed older than his years. Why

is it that young people always like to write poetry about being old and tired? Walter had all his mother's love for nature."

SUSAN BAKER, *thinking*:- "I wish, too, that there was never a clock in the world. And I wish I'd never opened my mouth to scold Walter for writing poetry."

JEM BLYTHE (*aside to Faith Meredith*):- "Mother reads a poem of Walter's over to us every now and then. I wonder if it is good for her."

FAITH (*aside*):- "Yes, it is. It helps an old ache. Do you think if you hadn't come back from that German prison I wouldn't have cherished and reread every letter you ever wrote me?"

WIND OF AUTUMN

*I walked with Wind of Autumn across the upland airy,
Where canny eyes might hope to spy the little Men in Green,
By road of firs that should have led right on to land of faery,
Enchanted lands the sun and moon between.*

*I might have met the Olden Gods in those wild friendly places,
I think they peeped at me and laughed as I went on my way,
The little fauns and satyrs hid in all the haunted places
Where Wind of Autumn led me on that day.*

*The hemlock harp for music, immortal wine for drinking,
Oh, but we were rare good comrades, that gallant wind and I,
As hand in hand we wandered till roguish stars were winking
Between the scurrying cloudlets in the sky.*

*And oh, my sleep was sweet that night until the dawn came shyly,
And all the pretty dreams I had made haste to slip away,
For Wind of Autumn just outside was calling, calling, slyly,
“Come with me for another spendthrift day.”*

Walter Blythe

RILLA:- “That was Walter’s idea of the wind. He used to love to hear it whistling down Rainbow Valley. And I think he did believe in ‘the Men in Green,’ Susan ... when he was a child, anyhow.”

SUSAN, *determinedly*:- “But not in the olden gods at any time, Rilla. You can never convince me that Walter was a pagan. He went to church and Sunday school every Sunday and liked it.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “If he had had to drive through the wind as often as I did before cars came in! Well, when I was a boy I loved the wind, too. Do you remember how it used to purr in Lover’s Lane, Anne?”

ANNE:- “As if I could ever forget anything connected with Lover’s Lane! And I remember, too, how it used to sweep up the Harbour some wild night while I was waiting for you to come home to our House of Dreams. Do you, Susan?”

SUSAN, *fervently*:- “Indeed I do!”

THE WILD PLACES

*Oh, here is joy that cannot be
In any market bought and sold,
Where forests beckon fold on fold
In a pale silver ecstasy,
And every hemlock is a spire
Of faint moon-fire.*

*For music we shall have the chill
Wild bugle of a vagrant wind,
Seeking for what it cannot find,
A lonely trumpet on the hill,
Or keening in the dear dim white
Chambers of night.*

*And there are colours in the wild ...
The royal purple of old kings ...
Rose-fire of secret dawn ... clear springs
Of emerald in valleys aisled
With red pine stems ... and tawny stir
Of dying fir.*

*And we shall know as lovers do
The wooing rain, the eternal lure
Of tricky brook and beckoning moor,
The hidden laughter that pursue,
As if the gods of elder day
Were here at play.*

*For these wild places hold their own
Boon myths of faun and goblin still,
And have a lingering goodwill*

*For folk in green if truth were known ...
Oh, what an old delightful fear ...
Hush ... listen ... hear!*

Walter Blythe

ANNE, *sighing*:- “Walter always loved the wild places. How he adored Rainbow Valley and the Upper Glen barrens!”

SUSAN, *under her breath*:- “I do not often question the purposes of the Almighty. But I should like to know why He makes a brain that can write things like that and then lets it be crushed to death.”

FOR ITS OWN SAKE

*I cherish love but for its own sweet sake,
Not hoping to win thine, but holding yet
Deep-hidden in my heart its precious ache:
Nor, if I could forget,
Would I so choose. I willingly yield me
Pensioner of a pain all joys above:
For its own dole and sweetness I love Love
And would its bondsman be!*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE, *thinking*:- “I remember that expressed my feelings pretty well when I thought Anne was going to marry Roy Gardiner. Odd how Anne has taken to writing so much more verse since Walter’s death. It does seem as if in some queer way Walter’s gift had descended to her instead of the reverse. Well, I daresay it is some outlet for the pain we feel when we think of him.”

THE CHANGE

*There is no difference this blithe morning
'Tween yesterday and today ...
The dim fringed poppies still are blowing
In sea fields misty and grey.*

*The west wind overhead in the beeches
Is the friend of lovers still,
And the river puts its arm as bluely
Around the beckoning hill.*

*The rose that laughed in the waning twilight
Laughs with the same delight,
But, pale and sweet as the lilies of Eden,
A little hope died last night.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- "I remember the day my 'little hope' of winning you died, Anne."

ANNE:- "And I remember the same."

UNA MEREDITH, *thinking*:- "I remember when mine died ... when the news of Walter's death came."

SUSAN BAKER, *thinking*:- "I remember the night I finally decided I had to be an old maid. I wonder if Whiskers-on-the-Moon felt any dead hopes after I chased him over the lawn with the dye pot. As far as I can understand it, writing poetry is just putting into rhyme what everyone feels. Why didn't I think of those things when we lived in the House of Dreams? Ah me, there was no hint of war then and Walter was not even born or thought of. I wonder if Mrs. Dr. dear is thinking of Walter or

little Joyce. No, she doesn't look sad enough for either. That is just one of the poems she writes for her own amusement."

I KNOW

*I know a dell of violets, a sweet and starry splendour,
Beside a misty little brook a-singing to the wind,
Where poplars whisper silkily, and ivory birches slender
Will tell me tales of elfin things that no one else may find.*

*I know a little path that runs across an upland hazy
Where shy grey rabbits peer at me from under bracken fern,
Where there are hints and glints and gleams of butterflies gone
crazy,
And some beguiling sight to see wherever I may turn.*

*I know a hill where I may hear the ancient fir trees calling,
To vale and shore and tawny dune and far eternal sea,
And I know a russet valley where when early dusk is falling,
There is a friendly little house with one to welcome me.*

Walter Blythe

RILLA:- “Walter wrote that with the thought of Rainbow Valley, too.
It crept into almost every poem he wrote.”

JEM:- “But what about ‘the little house’?”

RILLA:- “Oh, that was really Ingleside and mums. But he thought
‘little house’ more romantic. You can’t tie yourself strictly
down to facts in poetry.”

SUSAN:- “Nor in anything, I do believe. I’ve lived long enough to
learn that. There are some things that are truer than facts, as
Mrs. Dr. dear once said to me.”

Brother Beware

There had been no change in the Randebush household in the Upper Glen for fifteen years ... ever since Nancy, beloved wife of Amos Randebush, had died. Amos and his brother Timothy and Matilda Merry just jogged along peacefully and contentedly. At least Amos and Timothy were contented. If Matilda Merry ... who belied her name if ever a woman did ... was not contented it was her own fault. She had a good place as housekeeper and a pleasant grievance of chronic rheumatism. People said she was a fortune to Dr. Gilbert Blythe. Amos paid her fair wages and never growled when the biscuits were soggy or the roast was overdone. Sometimes, when he looked at her sitting at the head of his table and contrasted her skinny mouse-coloured hair and pessimistic countenance with Nancy's glossy tresses and rosy face, he sighed. But he never said anything. As for the rheumatism, a woman must have something to talk about.

Timothy was more philosophic. Matilda suited him very well. Nancy had been good-looking and a good housekeeper but blue cats, how she made you toe the mark in everything! You had to wear the soles off your boots scraping them before you came in. Even the minister and Dr. Blythe were no exception. Amos had at times rebelled under her rule though he remembered only her good qualities now. That was what women did to you, even after they were dead. Timothy thanked his stars that none of them had ever succeeded in bamboozling him. No, thank you! He had always hated them all in general, except Mrs. Dr. Blythe, whom he tolerated, but how he hated the Winkworth woman in particular! Dimples, by gad! Airs and graces, by jiminy! Taffy-coloured hair and come-hither eyes! Blue cats! Could anyone have supposed that Amos could be such a

fool? Wasn't one lesson enough? Evidently not, when you had a spineless creature like Amos and a plotting, wheedling, designing, desperate hussy like the Winkworth woman to deal with! Hold your horses! Amos might be quite helpless before her fascinations and Mrs. Blythe might be helping things along ... hadn't he heard she had a passion for matchmaking? ... but Amos had a brother to save him in spite of himself.

Miss Alma Winkworth was boarding with the Knapps at Glen St. Mary. It was reported through the Knapps that she worked in Hillier's Beauty Shoppe in Boston, that she had had an operation and had to have a longer vacation than her usual two weeks before going back to work. Timothy hadn't a speck of faith in that operation. Very likely the doctor and Mrs. Blythe were in the plot. Alma Winkworth wouldn't look so blooming if she had had an operation. It was merely a play for sympathy. She had just come to Glen St. Mary to see if she couldn't catch a man, and, by golly, she was on the point of succeeding. Would succeed if he, Timothy, didn't put a spoke in her wheel.

They had seen her first in church, sitting in the Blythe pew in front of them ... Maria Knapp never went to church ... a smiling creature, looking, as far as hair and complexion went, like a remarkably good advertisement for a beauty shop. Amos had never been the same man since. Next evening he went down to the Knapps' on some trumped-up excuse and that was the creature's opportunity. Look what she had done to him already. For all it was harvest time, when men had to work and sleep, Amos mooned through the day and when night came shaved and dressed, touched up his moustache and went to the Glen on some excuse about a meeting of the Fox Breeders' Association.

Another bad sign was that Amos had suddenly become sensitive about his age. When, on his fiftieth birthday, Timothy congratulated him on attaining the half-century mark Amos peevishly remarked that he didn't feel a day over forty. The Winkworth woman had told the Blythes that *she* was forty, no doubt to encourage Amos, for would any single woman admit to being forty if she had no nefarious purpose in it?

It seemed to Timothy that nothing less than a miracle could prevent Amos from asking the Winkworth woman to marry him. He had not done it yet ... Timothy was sure of that, from Amos' continual air of nervousness and uncertainty. But very soon he would screw his courage to

the sticking point. He would have to do it before another ten days elapsed for then he had to leave for the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, in charge of a consignment of silver foxes the Fox Breeders' Association was sending there. He would be absent for two weeks and the Winkworth woman's vacation would be over before he returned. So Timothy felt quite sure Amos would propose to her before he went.

No, by gad, he wouldn't! A lifelong, harmonious brotherhood was not going to be destroyed like this. Timothy had an inspiration from heaven. Joe's Island! There was your answer to prayer!

The details caused Timothy considerable anxiety. Time pressed and, rack his brains as he might, he could think of no way to lure the Winkworth woman to Joe's Island unbeknownst to anyone. But Providence opened a way. Mrs. Knapp came to the Upper Glen store and dropped in to have a visit with Matilda Merry. They sat on the back porch and rocked and gossiped until Timothy, lying on the kitchen sofa just inside the window, heard something that brought him to his feet in another flash of inspiration. Miss Winkworth, so Mrs. Knapp said, was going to Charlottetown to spend a day or two with a friend who lived there. She was going on the boat train. So was Mrs. Dr. Blythe, who was going up to Avonlea for a visit.

So this, Timothy scornfully reflected, was why Amos had seemed so dull and depressed all day and talked of getting some liver pills from Dr. Blythe. Blue cats! He must have it bad if the prospect of being parted from his ladylove for a couple of days drove him to liver pills! Well, the hotter the fire the quicker it burned out. Amos would soon get over his infatuation and be thankful for his escape ... yes, before Dr. Blythe's pills were half taken.

Timothy lost no time. He felt sure Amos was going to take her to the train but Amos' car was still visible down in the store yard. Timothy strode to the barn and got out his own car. His only fear was that Amos was going to call for Mrs. Blythe, too.

"Now where is *he* going?" said Mrs. Knapp, as Timothy's car swung out of the yard.

"Must be to the Harbour after fish," said Matilda. "He'd have shaved and dressed if he was going visiting even if it was only to Ingleside after

liver pills. Liver pills! Amos needs liver pills as much as I do. Timothy's forty-five if he's a day but vain as a peacock."

"Well, he's a real good-looking man," said Mrs. Knapp. "Away ahead of Amos if you ask me. Amos is what you might call insignificant ... as Mrs. Blythe would say."

"Do you think Amos and your boarder are going to make a match of it, Maria?"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mrs. Knapp. "He's certainly been very attentive. And Mrs. Dr. Blythe has done her best to bring it about. Nothing can cure *her* of matchmaking. And I think Miss Winkworth is pretty tired of struggling along by herself. But I can't be sure ... she's one to keep her own counsel."

The Winkworth woman was sitting on the Knapp veranda when Timothy drove up. She was dressed for travelling, in a natty suit and a smart little hat with a green bow and she had her packaway at her feet.

"Evening, Miss Winkworth," said Timothy briskly. "Sorry my brother couldn't come. He was detained by some fox business. So I've come to take you to the train."

"That is lovely of you, Mr. Randebush."

She certainly had a pleasant voice. And a very elegant figure. And a way of looking at you! All at once Timothy remembered that he hadn't shaved that day and that bits of chaff were sticking to his sweater.

"I guess we'd better hurry," he said grimly. "It's near train time."

The Winkworth woman stepped into the car unsuspiciously. Timothy glowed. This was far easier than he had expected. And thank goodness there had evidently been no arrangement with Mrs. Dr. Blythe.

But the crux would come when he turned off the Upper Glen road down the deep-rutted, grass-grown track that led to the bay. She would smell a rat there.

She did.

"This isn't the road to the station, is it?" she said with a little note of wonder in her voice.

"No, it isn't," said Timothy, more grimly than ever. "We aren't going to the station."

"Mr. Randebush ..."

The Winkworth woman found herself staring into a pair of very stern eyes.

“You are not going to be hurt, miss. No harm of any kind is intended if you do just as you are told and keep quiet.”

The Winkworth woman, after one gasp, kept quiet. Probably she thought you had to humour madmen.

“Get out,” said Timothy, when they reached the end of the road. “Then go right down the wharf and get into the boat that’s tied there.”

There was nobody in sight. The Winkworth woman walked down the old wharf, Timothy following closely behind, feeling splendidly bold and buccaneery. Blue cats! This was the way to manage them! And yet Dr. Blythe was always saying that women were the equal of men!

When they were off and skimming merrily over the Harbour she said gently, with a disarming little tremor in her voice, “Where ... where are you taking me, Mr. Randebush?”

No harm in telling her.

“I’m taking you to Joe’s Island, miss. It’s four miles across the Harbour. I’m going to leave you there for a few days and my reason is my own business, as Dr. Blythe would say. As I’ve said you won’t be hurt and you’ll be quite comfortable. Kenneth Ford’s summer house is on the island and I’m caretaker for him. The Fords went to Europe this summer instead of coming to Glen St. Mary. There’s plenty of canned stuff in the house and a good stove and I reckon you can cook. At least, Mrs. Dr. Blythe told my brother Amos you could.”

She took it admirably ... you had to hand it to her. Almost any woman he knew, except Mrs. Dr. Blythe, would have gone into hysterics. She did not even ask what his reason was. Likely she guessed, durn her! Sitting there as cool and composed as if being kidnapped was all in a day’s work!

“Don’t you think someone will raise a hue and cry when I’m found missing?” she asked after an interval.

“Who’s to miss you?” he said. “Amos will think you got afraid and took another chance.”

“Your brother wasn’t taking me. I was going up with the Flaggs,” said the Winkworth woman gently. “But when I don’t come back day after tomorrow won’t Mrs. Knapp wonder?”

“No. She’ll think you’ve just been induced to stay longer in town. And the Doctor and his wife are going to stay for two weeks in Avonlea. Besides, what if people do start wondering? They’ll just think you’ve gone back to Boston to get out of paying your board.”

The Winkworth woman said nothing in reply to this cruelty. She looked afar over the sunset harbour. She *had* a way of tilting her head. Little taffy-coloured curls escaped from under the edges of her hat.

Suddenly she smiled.

Timothy experienced a queer tickly sensation in his spine.

“The wind is west tonight, isn’t it?” she said dreamily. “And oh, look, Mr. Randebush, there is the evening star!”

As if nobody had ever seen the evening star before!

Of course she knew she was showing that pretty throat of hers off when she lifted her face to the sky!

This kidnapping of a woman was a durned dangerous business. He didn’t like that sensation in his spine.

Maybe she didn’t think he really meant that about leaving her on Joe’s Island. She’d likely be good and mad when she found he did.

Well, there was plenty of room to be mad in. Four miles from anywhere. Nothing but fishing boats ever went near Joe’s Island when no one was there and they never landed. No light would show through the solid shutters and if anybody saw smoke coming through the chimneys they’d think it was only he, Timothy, airing the house.

Golly, but it was a masterly trick, this!

“Stars are quite common in Glen St. Mary,” he said shortly.

The Winkworth woman did not speak again. She sat and looked at that confounded star until they were close to the boat pier on Joe’s Island.

“Now, miss,” said Timothy briskly, “here we are.”

“Oh, Mr. Randebush, do you really mean that you are going to maroon me on this lonely place? Is there nothing I can say will make you change your mind? Think what Mrs. Dr. Blythe will think of your conduct.”

“Miss,” said Timothy sternly ... all the more sternly because there was no doubt in the world that there *was* a fascination about her and he really did care a good deal about the Blythes’ opinion ... “Try molding granite if you want an easy job, but don’t try to change a Randebush when he has once deter-mined on a course of action.”

“Mrs. Blythe told me you were all very stubborn,” she said meekly as she stepped out on the pier. A very beguiling fragrance seemed to exhale from her ... another advertisement for the beauty shop, no doubt ... though Mrs. Blythe did smell the same when she came into church.

The Kenneth Ford house was built on the high rocky point on the north of the little island. All the windows were shuttered with good strong wooden shutters. Doors and shutters were securely locked and Timothy had all the keys ... or thought he had. He felt quite sure that even the Blythes did not have one. There was everything in the house one wanted for comfort ... canned foods, coffee, tea, running water.

“You can be quite comfortable here, miss. It’s dark, of course, but there’s plenty of lamps and coal oil. The bed in the north room upstairs is aired ... I saw to that yesterday.”

Timothy’s face was red. He suddenly felt that it was a most indelicate thing to talk about beds to a lady.

Without another word he went out and locked the door. As he did so he felt a twinge of compunction.

It was too much like locking the door of a jail.

“But don’t get maudlin, Timothy Randebush,” he told himself sternly. “Amos has got to be saved and this is the only way. You know she can’t be let run loose. She’d signal some fishing boat quicker than a wink. The boats sometimes run close to Joe’s Island when the wind is east.”

Halfway across the bay he suddenly thought, Blue cats! Were there any matches in the Ford house? He had lighted a lamp when he went in but when she had to refill it it would go out and what then?

To his wrath and amazement Timothy found himself unable to sleep. Well, you didn’t kidnap a woman every night. No doubt it did something to your nervous system. If he could only stop wondering if she had any matches!

Blue cats! If she hadn’t she couldn’t light a fire to cook with! She’d starve to death. No, she wouldn’t. The meat in the cans was already cooked. Even if it was cold it would sustain life.

Turn over and go to sleep, Timothy Randebush. Timothy turned over but he did not go to sleep.

The worst of it was he could not take her matches in the morning. The wheat had to be got in and for him to start off on a cruise to Joe’s Island,

which would take the best part of the forenoon, would be to arouse Amos' suspicions ... or so thought Timothy's guilty conscience.

The day seemed endless. When the last load was in, Timothy shaved and dressed in a hurry and not waiting for supper under the pretence of having to see a man at Harbour Mouth on business, got out his car and started for the shore, stopping at one of the village stores to get matches.

The evening had turned cold and foggy and a raw wind was blowing up the Harbour. Timothy was chilled to the bone when he landed on Joe's Island. But when he unlocked the kitchen door after a preliminary knock ... for manners' sake ... a most delightful sight greeted his eyes and a most delightful smell his nostrils.

A cheery fire was burning in the range and Alma Winkworth, in a trailing, lacy, blue dress, protected by a rose-coloured apron, was frying codfish cakes on it. The whole kitchen was filled with their appetizing aroma, blent with the odour of coffee. A plate of golden-brown muffins was atop of the warming oven.

She came forward to meet him eagerly, a warm, friendly smile on her face ... a smile that somehow reminded him of Mrs. Dr. Blythe's. Her cheeks were flushed from the heat of the stove, her rich hair curled in tendrils around her forehead and her eyes shone. Timothy actually thought this and then was horribly ashamed of such a thought.

Maudlin ... that's what it was ... worse than Amos. Blue cats! There was something the matter with the pit of his stomach. It had been the spine before, now it was the pit of his stomach.

It must be the smell of that supper. He hadn't had a mouthful to eat since twelve o'clock.

"Oh, Mr. Randebush, I'm so glad to see you," she was saying.

"It occurred to me that you mightn't have any matches and I thought I'd better bring you some," said Timothy gruffly.

"Oh, wasn't that clever of you!" she said gratefully.

Timothy didn't see where the cleverness came in but she contrived to make him feel like a wonder man.

"Won't you sit down awhile, Mr. Randebush?" she said.

"No, thanks." Timothy was gruffer than ever. "I've got to get back and get my supper."

“Oh, Mr. Randebush, won’t you have a bite with me? There’s plenty for two ... and it’s so lonely eating alone. Besides, these cakes are made after Susan Baker’s famous recipe. She imparted it to me as a special favour.”

Timothy told himself that it was the smell of the coffee that was weakening him. The dishwater that Matilda Merry called coffee!

He found that his hat was taken and he was gently pushed into a chair.

“Just sit there until I lift my codfish cakes. I know better than to try to talk to a hungry man.”

Such codfish cakes ... such muffins ... such coffee! And such common sense! No bothering you with conversation. She just let you eat your fill in comfort.

To be sure, that queer sensation still persisted, even though his stomach was no longer empty. But what matter? Dr. Blythe always said the less attention you paid to your stomach the better. Not many doctors knew as much as Dr. Blythe.

“It’s really very nice to have a man in the house,” said Alma Winkworth after Timothy’s second cup of coffee.

“I s’pose you find it rather lonesome,” said Timothy gruffly. Then he reproached himself for his gruffness. It was necessary, of course, to save Amos from her clutches, but one didn’t need to be a clown.

The Randebushes had always prided themselves on their good manners. But she wasn’t going to get around him with her blarney and her lonesomeness. *He* had cut his eyeteeth.

“A little,” she said wistfully. “You might sit awhile and talk to me, Mr. Randebush.”

“Can’t do it, miss. You must get your gossip from Mrs. Knapp and Mrs. Blythe.”

“But Mrs. Blythe never gossips and Mrs. Knapp is a newcomer.”

“Can’t do it, miss. Thank you for the supper. Susan Baker herself couldn’t have beaten those cakes. But I must be getting along.”

She was looking at him admiringly, with her hands clasped under her chin. It was years, he thought, since a woman had looked admiringly at him.

“I suppose you haven’t an aspirin about you,” she said wistfully again. “I’m afraid I’ve a headache coming on. I take one occasionally.”

Timothy had no aspirin. He thought about it all the way home and most of the night.

Suppose she was there alone, suffering. There was no help for it ... he'd have to go again the next night and take her a supply of aspirin.

He took the aspirin. He also took a brown paper parcel containing two pork chops and two bounds of butter wrapped in a rhubarb leaf. Matilda Merry missed it but never knew what became of it.

He found Alma Winkworth sitting by a rock maple fire in the living room. She wore a cherry-red dress with little red drops in her ears. Blue cats! What women could carry in packaways!

She ran to meet him with lovely dimpled hands outstretched.

"Oh, I've been waiting for you all the evening, Mr. Randebush, *hoping* you would come. I had such a dreadful night without the aspirin. And you've brought some!"

"I hope it's fresh. I had to get it at the store since Dr. Blythe wasn't home."

"I'm sure it will be all right. You are really so kind and thoughtful. You *must* sit down and talk to me for a little while."

Timothy, who had come to the conclusion that the feeling in the pit of his stomach was chronic and that he'd better consult Dr. Blythe about it, sat down slowly.

"Amos worked his first wife to death," Timothy found himself saying, without the least idea why he said it.

Then he was overcome with remorse.

"No, he didn't. She worked herself to death. But he didn't prevent her."

Again, remorse. Blue cats! What sort of a man was he, slandering his brother like this?

"I don't suppose he could have prevented her. Some women are like that."

Alma Winkworth was laughing. Her laugh, like everything else about her, was pleasant.

"You *have* such a knack of putting things, Mr. Randebush."

The firelight sparkled and shimmered over her shining hair and beautiful dress. Timothy could see her thus quite clearly all the way home.

She had thanked him so appealingly for his visit and asked him if he couldn't come again. Well, he might ... after a night or two. Of course it

was mighty lonesome for her there with not even a dog to talk to. Suppose he took her a dog. No, that would never do. A dog might attract attention by barking. But a cat, now. The very thing. She had mentioned she was fond of cats ... also that she had heard a rat. He'd take her a cat. He'd better take it the next evening. Rats sometimes did a lot of damage.

By four o'clock the next day Timothy was skimming across the Harbour. In the bow was a yowling, squirming, shapeless thing ... Matilda Merry's cat tied up in a potato bag.

Timothy suspected that Matilda Merry would raise Cain when she missed her pet but after kidnapping women you grew callous in respect to cats.

Alma insisted that Timothy have supper with her and vowed she was delighted with the cat. While they sat and talked after supper she held the creature on her lap and caressed it.

Timothy had a spasm of horror when he realized that he was envying the cat.

The next day Amos suddenly announced that he was starting for Toronto on Monday instead of Wednesday. There was some fox business to be attended to before the Exhibition came on. Timothy was relieved. Amos had not been a very cheerful housemate of late ... worried because Alma Winkworth was lingering so long in Charlottetown, most likely. He didn't know her address so he couldn't hunt her up.

Well, Amos would soon be gone so he could set Alma free. The thought plunged him into gloom instead of exultation.

It took him some little time to realize what had happened to him. He did not go to Joe's Island that night or the next night ... would not have gone for a million dollars, he told himself.

But he had to go the third night for Amos was safely on his way to Toronto and there was no longer the slightest need for keeping Alma Winkworth mewed up. Besides, the Blythes were back and he mistrusted Mrs. Blythe. She was entirely too clever for a woman.

"I thought you were never coming back," said Alma with tender reproach. "I've missed you so."

With one look of those soft eyes Alma could say more things than most women could utter in a year. Their sorcery had undone Timothy and he knew it at last ... and did not care.

"I'm a wreck ... shattered fore and aft," he thought dismally. He had really felt it since the moment she looked at the star. It was a kind of relief to admit it ... though everyone would laugh at him ... except Mrs. Blythe. Somehow he felt she would not laugh.

"Amos has gone to Toronto and I've come to let you out," he said desperately.

For a fleeting second it struck him that she didn't look overjoyed. Then she said slowly,

"Would you mind telling me now why you brought me here in the first place?"

"To keep Amos from proposing to you," Timothy blurted out. She might as well know the worst of him.

"Your brother asked me to marry him the night before you kidnapped me," she was saying quietly. "I ... I said 'no.' I felt I didn't ... couldn't ... marry anybody unless I really loved him ... I really couldn't ... much as I'd like to have a home of my own."

She had said it ... but it didn't make sense. Timothy stared blankly at her. She smiled mischievously at him.

"Of course it would have been nice to have been related to *you*, dear Mr. Randebush."

Timothy cleared his throat.

"Miss Winkworth ... Alma ... I never was one to beat about the bush. Mrs. Blythe would tell you that if she was here."

Mrs. Blythe had told Alma a good many things about Timothy but she kept her own counsel.

"Will you marry *me*?" said Timothy. "I ... I am very fond of stars. Mrs. Blythe could tell you that. I've got a good house on my own farm ... if it's fixed up a bit and a veranda built on. I'd like to take care of you ..."

Alma Winkworth smiled again ... with a little relief in it. No more insolent and absurd customers for renewed beauty ... no more lean vacations in cheap boarding houses. *And* the fine-looking man she had admired so much the first time she had seen him in Glen St. Mary Church.

"Why don't you set your cap for Timothy Randebush?" Mrs. Blythe had said once teasingly. "He's away ahead of Amos in every way."

She came close to him. Timothy Randebush, tingling with the thrills of the first love in all his forty-five years, found himself clasping her in his

arms.

An hour ... or a century ... later, Timothy, carrying the cat and the packaway ... Matilda Merry often wondered where her cat had been so long but then cats had their ways ... turned down the hall to the side door.

“We’ll go out this way, Miss Winkworth ... Alma ... dear. It’ll be easier for you walking down to the beach than from the other doors.”

He set down the packaway and the cat, selected a key and tried to open it. It would not turn. He tried the knob. The door opened easily.

“Blue cats! The door is unlocked!” he exclaimed.

“It has been unlocked ever since I came here,” said Alma Winkworth demurely. “Mrs. Blythe and I were over here one day and I suppose we forgot to lock it. She has a key to it, you know.”

The Second Evening

THE WIND

*Out in the ways of the wind went I,
And its elfin voices sang to me,
I heard it calling from far and nigh
In wild sweet notes that rang to me.
Wind of the east and wind of the west,
Whichever blows I love it the best,
Wind of the night and wind of the day,
'Tis a very good friend of mine always.*

*Came the wind of the salt grey seas,
With a bite and a tang in the breath of it,
Binding with bitter sorceries
Those who walk in the path of it.
Told me many a ghostly tale
Of ragged rock and vanished sail,
Told me of mystery shores afar
Where islands of enchantment are.*

*Out of a solitude free as thought
Came the wind of the waste to me,
The wind of the waste where man is not,
By the way of the stars it raced to me.
Whispered to me of a lonely land,
Leagues of unbroken, moon-washed sand,*

*Great serenities, sunset born,
Midnoon hush and unfettered morn.*

*Came the wind of the long green hill,
A vagabond wind to the heart of it,
Loud or low as it listeth, still
Courage and laughter are part of it.
A madcap wind that knows full well
Where the fairy folk of the upland dwell,
A wind that knows a mortal's quest
Must lead to the gateways of the west.*

*But I loved the wind of the valley more
With the homely wholesome croon of it,
The wind of the hearth and the open door,
Friendship and love were the boon of it.
Wind of a garden of balm and musk,
Wind of the midnight, wind of the dusk,
Wind of the valley, blow for me
Wherever my own fireside may be.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- "I've always liked the wind, as I think I've remarked before." susan:- "I can't say as much. It sounds so dismal at night, yowling round the eaves."

JEM BLYTHE:- "I like that verse about 'my own fireside,' mother. When I was in the trenches I used to think of the wind blowing up the harbour around Ingleside."

DR. BLYTHE:- "Your poem reminds me curiously of Walter's, although it is quite different in a way. I think that it is one of your best efforts, Anne-girl. That you can write so well shows the wound is healing."

ANNE, *sadly*:- "But the scar will always be there, Gilbert."

DR. BLYTHE:- "Yes, with us all. Don't think I don't realize that, darling."

THE BRIDE DREAMS

*Love, is it dawn that creeps in so grey,
Like the timid ghost,
All shrinking and pale, of the dead sweet night,
Lived and enjoyed to the uttermost
Of its swift delight!
Love, hold me close for I am a-cold
With the grave's own chill,
And my cheek must yet have the smear of the mould ...
I have dreamed a dream as here I lay
Next to your heart ... in my dream I died
And was buried deep, deep in the yard beside
The old church on the hill.
(Oh, the dream was bitter!)*

*By my gravestone a rose was blowing red,
Red as love.
The world was full of the laughter of spring ...
I heard it down there in my clammy bed ...
The little birds sang in the trees above,
The wind was glad with the clouds that fled
All white and pearly across the sky,
And the pretty shadows went winking by
Like tricksy, madcap thoughts awing.*

*You had buried me in my wedding gown
Of silk and lace ...
My hair curled blackly my neck adown,
But my lips, I knew, were white in my face,
And the flower I held in my stiff hand yet
Was slimy and wet.
(Keep me from death, oh my lover!)*

*Still, though the clay was heaped over me,
I could see ... I could see
The folk going by to the old church door;
Wives and mothers and maids went by
All fine and silken, rosy and sweet:
Some came with a tear their graves to greet
But to mine only old mad Margaret came,
And she laughed to herself as she read my name
With an evil laughter evil and sly,
That pierced like a dart to my cold heart's core.*

*I saw the old maid go bitterly in
Who had known no love ...
Two brothers who hated each other well ...
Miser Jock with his yellow skin ...
A girl with the innocent eyes of a dove ...
A young wife with a bonny child ...
And Lawrence, the man who never smiled
With his lips but always mocked with his eyes.
(Oh love, the grave makes us far too wise,
I knew why he mocked!)*

*Then I felt a thrill the dank earth through
And I knew ... oh, I knew
That it came from your step on our path from the dale ...
Almost my heart began to beat!
And you passed by with another bride
Proud of her golden ring at your side ...
That slim white girl who lives at the mill,
Who has loved you always and loves you still,
With her hair the colour of harvest wheat
And her lips as red as mine were pale.*

*How I hated her, so tall and fair,
And shining of hair ...
Love, I am so little and dark!*

*My heart, that had once soared up like a lark
At your glance, was as a stone in my breast;
Never once did you look my way,
Only at her you looked and kissed
With your eyes her eyes of amethyst ...
My eyes were sunk in cruel decay
And the worms crawled in the silk of my vest ...
(Keep me from death, oh my lover!)*

*Love, hold me close for I am a-cold!
It was only a dream ... as a dream it has fled.
Kiss me warm from its lingering chill,
Burn from my face the taint of the dead,
Kiss my hair that is black not gold ...
Am I not as sweet as the girl at the mill?
(Oh, the dream was bitter!)*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “Anne-girl, I’ve no earthly wish to interfere with anything you want to write. But isn’t that rather morbid?”

SUSAN, *under her breath*:- “She never wrote like that before Walter died. I wish I’d gone to school longer and then maybe I’d understand it. And I’ve never made light of dreams since Miss Oliver’s dreams in the war. But I *do* think Absalom Flagg might have waited a little longer before marrying again. I wonder if Mrs. Dr. dear was thinking of him and Jen Elliott. As for the old maid who had never known love ... well, I’ve got past the stage of caring. Mrs. Blythe didn’t mean to hurt my feelings and that I will tie to.”

ANNE:- “The whole thing was the outcome of some story I heard long ago.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “It just doesn’t seem like you ... not like my Anne-girl of old Avonlea days, that’s all.”

ANNE, *trying to laugh*:- “Would you marry as quick as that if I died, Gilbert?”

DR. BLYTHE, *really laughing*:- “Quicker, if Susan would have me.

Isn’t it about time for supper?”

SUSAN:- “It is ready and your favourite pie is ready, too.”

DR. BLYTHE, *thinking*:- “I imagine it’s time Anne had a trip somewhere.”

MAY SONG

*Across the sunlit sea
The singing birds return,
Those travellers far and free
To many an ancient bourne.
The winds are very gay
O'er every gusty hill,
Glad vagabonds of May
To frolic where they will.*

*Sun-odours wild and sweet
As some old memory
Fill reedy hollows, meet
For lurking alchemy.
The morns are fair and white
Unto the crystal noon,
Magic is spun at night
Beneath an ivory moon.*

*The world is full of songs ...
Like hearts of voiceless birds ...
To us the joy belongs
Of giving to them words.
To us the joy of May,
Of every lyric thing ...
What though our heads are grey?
No one is old in spring.*

*No one is old and sad,
Immortal youth is here ...
We'll just be mad and glad
With the mad, glad young year!*

Walter Blythe

SUSAN BAKER:- “I used to think no one could be old and sad in spring but I have learned different.”

RILLA FORD (*who is home for a visit*):- “Walter wrote that in Rainbow Valley, too. Oh, it brings it all back to me. Mother ... mother!”

ANNE:- “Rilla darling, Walter has gone to eternal spring. We all felt as he did once. And perhaps he was right. The years are still mad and glad in May ... it is only we who have changed.”

Here Comes the Bride

The old church at Glen St. Mary was crowded. Somehow this particular wedding seemed unusual. It was not often there was a church wedding in Glen St. Mary and still less often one of the summer colony. Somebody from Charlottetown was playing the wedding march very faintly and softly and the two families most concerned stood in small clusters or alone, the collective reverberence of their words rising and falling in soft waves of sound.

A bored reporter from the *Daily Enterprise* was covering the function.

“The old church at Glen St. Mary was thronged with guests this afternoon for the marriage of Evelyn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James March, who are spending their summer in Glen St. Mary, to Dr. D’Arcy Phillips, professor of biology at McGill and son of Mrs. F.W. Phillips and the late Frederick Phillips of Mowbray Narrows.

“The church was beautifully decorated with white mums by the teenage girls’ class of Glen St. Mary and the lovely bride was given away by her father. She wore ivory satin, fashioned with a mid-Victorian line and a halo of seed pearls held in place her wedding veil of rare old lace. It was whispered that the rather faded bow of blue ribbon hidden under the pearls was worn by Mrs. Gilbert Blythe at her own wedding. ‘Something borrowed and something blue,’ you know.

“Miss Marnie March was maid of honour for her sister and the three bridesmaids, Miss Rhea Bailey, Miss Diana Blythe and Miss Janet Small, wore period gowns of silver cloth and picture hats of periwinkle blue with bouquets of blue iris, etc., etc., etc.

“The reception afterwards was held at Merestead, the beautiful new summer home of the Marches at Glen St. Mary, where glowing roses made

an attractive decoration for the glowing rooms. The bride's table was centred with the handsome wedding cake made by Mary Hamilton, who has been with the Marches thirty years as cook, nurse, and beloved member of the household.

"Mrs. March received her guests in a modish gown of grey, with a slight train, smart hat of black straw, and corsage of deep purple Princess violets.

"Mrs. Frederick Phillips was in blue chiffon, matching hat, and corsage of yellow rosebuds.

"Later the bride and groom left to spend their honeymoon at the groom's camp, Juniper Island, Muskoka, Ontario. The bride's going-away ensemble etc., etc., etc.

"Among the guests were Mrs. Helen Bailey, Miss Prue Davis, Mrs. Barbara Morse, Mr. Douglas March (great-uncle of the bride, a hearty octogenarian of Mowbray Narrows), Mrs. Dr. Blythe, etc."

Aunt Helen Bailey, sister of the bride's father and the mother of three unwedded and unbespoken daughters, among them one of the bridesmaids, thinking,

"So Amy has really got Evelyn off her hands at last. What a relief it must be to her! A girl like Evelyn ... past her first youth ... with one of those skins that age early ... not like Mrs. Blythe's. Will that woman ever grow old! ... and that affair with Elmer Owen ... it's really quite a triumph to get her married, even to a poor young professor like D'Arcy Phillips. I can remember him running barefoot round Glen St. Mary and cutting up didoes with the Ingleside boys.

"Amy was simply heartbroken when the engagement to Elmer was broken off. She tried to brazen it off but everyone knew. Of course Evelyn never cared a scrap for him ... it was his money she was after. That girl hasn't a particle of heart ... she couldn't love anyone.

"I wonder what really went wrong between her and Elmer ... nobody knows, though that silly Mrs. Blythe looks so wise when it is spoken of. Of course *his* parents never approved of it, but at one time he seemed quite taken with her. Amy certainly thought she had him trussed and skewered. How she used to purr over it! Such a ring! It must almost have killed Evelyn to give it back. It will be a long time before D'Arcy Phillips will be able to give her a square emerald.

“It was really indelicate the way she snapped D’Arcy up the moment Elmer threw her over. But it’s easy enough to get a man if you don’t care what you do. My poor girls haven’t the audacity necessary for today. They’re sweet and well-bred and womanly, but that doesn’t count any longer. It’s all very well for Dr. Blythe to say girls are the same in all ages. A lot he knows! No, nowadays you’ve got to stalk your man.

“Why don’t they come? The seats in these country churches are always so hard. *Look* at that mosquito on Morton Gray’s fat jowl! Doesn’t the man feel it? No, he’s probably too thick-skinned to feel anything. I wish I could give it a slap ... my nerves are getting jumpy.

“What a lot of guests! And all the yokels from Glen St. Mary and Mowbray Narrows. I suppose a fashionable wedding is a treat to them. Prue Davis has a new dress and is trying to look as if it were an ordinary occasion. Poor Prue! Barbara Morse is making nasty remarks about everyone. I know by the look on her face. Ah, Mrs. Blythe has just snubbed her. I can tell by the look on *her* face. But it won’t cure Barbara. The ruling passion! She’d gossip at a funeral, so why not at a fashionable wedding, where everyone knows the bride is taking the groom as a consolation prize and he is taking her heaven knows why ... probably because she just went after him. It’s all nonsense of Mrs. Blythe to say they have always been in love. Everybody knows they fought like cat and dog all their lives. Evelyn has an indomitable will under all that surface sugar ... just like Mrs. Blythe. I wonder if Dr. Blythe is as happy as he pretends to be. No man could be.

“Is that really Jim’s old Uncle Douglas there? I suppose they can have all their country cousins since the groom is only D’Arcy and the wedding in Glen St. Mary. But if it had been Elmer, at some fashionable church in town, they’d have been kept in the background. Uncle Douglas is evidently enjoying himself. A wedding feast is a wedding feast no matter how it comes about. He’ll have something to talk about for years. *What* is Rose Osgood wearing? She must simply have put her hand in the family ragbag and pulled out the first thing she grabbed. I wonder how Mrs. Blythe, living in Glen St. Mary, always contrives to look so up-to-date. Well, I suppose her daughters ...

“There goes Wagner at last, thank goodness. Here they come. Four ushers ... four bridesmaids ... two flower girls and a page. Humph! Well, I

hope everything's paid for. Those white mums must have cost Jim a small fortune. I don't believe for a moment they came from the Ingleside garden. How could anyone grow mums like that in a little country place like Glen St. Mary? Where Jim finds the money I'm sure I can't imagine.

"Evelyn's looking well, but she shouldn't have her dress cut that way ... it gives her sway back away ... lordosis is the name nowadays, I believe ... Evelyn is positively triumphant ... no shrinking violet about *her*. I remember the day Amy gave the coming-out tea for her debutante daughter. And was she awkward! But of course seven seasons should give anyone poise.

"D'Arcy isn't much to look at ... his face is too long ... but poor Rhea looks quite as well as the other bridesmaids. That shade of blue is so trying ... probably Evelyn selected it for that reason. Marnie looks like a gypsy as usual ... only gypsies aren't quite so plump, are they? Amy will find it even harder to get her settled than Evelyn. Diana Blythe looks rather well. There really is something about those Blythe girls ... though I'd never admit it to their mother.

"'I will' ... oh, my dear, you needn't *shout* it! Everyone knows you will only too willingly. Even in Glen St. Mary they all know that D'Arcy was your last chance. It's odd how things get around! Of course the Blythes have lots of friends in Montreal and Toronto. And Mrs. Blythe may have the reputation of not being a gossip ... but she contrives to get things told ... clever woman. Well, as for Evelyn, a professor's salary is better than an old maid's pension, no doubt. They're off to the vestry. Mrs. D'Arcy Phillips! You can see it sticking out all over her. Look at Diana Blythe making eyes at that young what's-his-name. And yet they say the Blythe girls never flirt! I doubt if she'll be able to rope him in, for all her mother's fine tactics. However, *that* is none of my business. I'm sure I hope poor Evelyn will be happy. But it doesn't seem to me that anyone can be very happy when she's simply marrying one man to save her face because another jilted her. *Is* anyone really happy in this mad world? They say the Blythes ... but who knows what goes on behind the scenes? Not even old Susan Baker, I'll bet my hat. Besides, she's too loyal to admit ...

"Now for the reception and the presents ... and the usual silly remarks ... and then the trip to Muskoka in D'Arcy's new flivver. I wonder if the *Enterprise* will mention that the car is a flivver! Some difference between

that and Elmer's fifteen-thousand-dollar streamliner ... or even Jim's old Packard. But Evelyn will have to come down to a good many things. Jim always spoiled his family. There they come ... quite a procession. I believe that boy is in love with Diana Blythe ... if it lasts. No doubt Mrs. Blythe will do all she can to keep the fire burning. They tell me that woman is a terrible matchmaker. I wish I had the knack. Then perhaps *my* girls ... well, well, Diana Blythe, you're welcome to your young man if some other girl doesn't snatch him up ..."

Prue Davis, a bit passé and envious of all brides in general, thinking,

"It seems so funny that Evelyn is marrying D'Arcy Phillips after all, when she has used him so abominably for years. He's only a poor young professor ... but of course any port in a storm. She's twenty-five ... and looks it ... more, I should say. Is that why she picked young bridesmaids? Diana Blythe looks sweet. Somehow, those Blythe girls are the only girls I ever met I really liked ... and their mother is the only woman I ever felt I could love. If I'd had a mother like her! Well, we have to take what's handed out to us in this world, parents and children alike. D'Arcy is nice and clever ... there was a time when I might have caught him on the rebound ... after one of the worst of their quarrels. But I always drop my bread butter side down ... I've always been a fool and missed my chances. Of course the minute Evelyn crooked her finger he came to heel. Nobody else had any chance then. It's just a way she has of looking up under her eyelids ... the Blythe girls all have it too, I've noticed ... well, some people have all the luck.

"I hope I won't get this dress spotted ... receptions are such horrible things for that ... for heaven knows when I'll get another. There they come ... Evelyn looks well ... she always knows how to wear her clothes, I'll say that for her. It's born in you. Look at Diana Blythe. I'll bet that dress of hers didn't cost a tenth as much as the others did ... I believe I heard a rumour she had it made in Charlottetown while the others came from Montreal ... and yet, look at it. Her hair, too. I never liked Evelyn's ash-blond hair. Heigh-ho! I found a grey hair today. We Davises all turn grey young. Oh, things are so beastly cruel. How do you do, Mrs. Blythe? A lovely wedding, wasn't it?

"Now, Prue Davis, haven't you any pride? Throw back your head and look as if you were sitting on top of the world.

“Thank heaven, that’s over. I don’t think any more people will speak to me. I don’t know many of the country folks here except the Blythes and they’ve gone. I wish the reception was over, too. I’m beginning to hate going to such things. ‘What, Prue Davis *still*! When are we going to attend *your* wedding?’ Apart from remarks like that, nobody would ever talk to me, except old married men. My looks are going and it’s no use having brains. When I say a clever thing to people they look startled and uncomfortable. I should just like to be quiet for years and years ... and not have to go on pretending to be bright and happy and quite, *quite* satisfied. But I suppose most people have to do it. Only sometimes I think Mrs. Blythe ...

“Oh, there’s someone else. How do you do, Mrs. Thompson? Oh, a lovely wedding! And such a charming bride! Oh, *me*! I’m not so easy to please as some girls, you know. And independence is *very* sweet, Mrs. Thompson.

“Of course she doesn’t believe for a moment I think that way but one must keep one’s head up. Now for it.”

Cousin Barbara Morse to a friend,

“So this is what I’ve come all the way from Toronto for! These family ties ... they’re really all hooey. But I always liked Jim ...

“It seems to me I’ve been here for hours. But you have to come early if you want an aisle seat ... and you can’t see much if you have any other one. Besides, it’s really fun looking at everybody as they come in. Not that there’s much to look at here ... most of the people are country folks. I suppose a fashionable wedding like this is a veritable godsend to them. The Blythes of Ingleside seem to be the only ones who can pretend to any culture. I thought Mrs. Blythe a very charming woman. The doctor, like all the men, thinks he knows it all. But they have a charming family ... at least, those I’ve met.

“The bridal party will be late, of course ... none of Jim’s family were ever known to be on time. *Everybody* seems to have been invited ... and to have come. Of course it’s just the time of year when a trip to P.E.I. has a special charm. I really had no idea what a delightful place it was. I must come again. Oh, so you come every summer? So I suppose you know most of the people well. Oh, you have a summer cottage at Avonlea? That was Dr. Blythe’s old home, wasn’t it? Isn’t it strange that a man of his ability

should have chosen to settle in a place like Glen St. Mary? Well, I suppose it is predestination.

“Why doesn’t Mattie Powell get those terrible moles removed? Electrolysis does it so nicely. Really, some people don’t seem to care how they look. How fat Mabel Mattingly is getting. But *I* shouldn’t talk. I *never* get weighed now. It simply won’t do ... I’m blue for a week afterwards. Jane Morris of Toronto told me she took four inches off her hips, living just on buttermilk. I wonder ... but I’d never have the grit to do it. I’m too fond of a good bite. I hope they’ll give us something eatable at the house. But Amy never was much of a housewife. Of course Mary Hamilton is a good cook. I suppose that is why they take her with them every summer when they go away. Oh, of course I know she’s just like one of the family. Amy always spoiled her servants.

“Look at Carry Ware ... that stringy old chiffon! You’d have thought she’d have got something new for a wedding, at least. Even Min Carstairs has a new dress. I hear the Carstairs have come into money. They live in Charlottetown, you know. And Andrew Carstairs is as mean as skim milk. Of course that rose and silver is far too young for her. What’s that? Do you mean to tell me she is only as old as Mrs. Blythe? Well, city women always age more rapidly than country women. I agree with you ... Mrs. Blythe is the best dressed woman here ... at least she gives that impression. And yet they say she gets all her clothes made in Charlottetown. But some people have a knack ...

“Talking of ages ... can *you* tell me how Sue MacKenzie contrives to look thirty-five when she is forty-seven? I’m not uncharitable, heaven knows ... but one can’t help wondering. When *she* was married ... so the story goes ... her father made her go back upstairs and wash the powder off her face. If he could see her now! No, they tell me Mrs. Blythe never makes up. But country people are so easily fooled. She couldn’t look like that without a little make-up. As for Sue’s father ... he was *such* an odd man, my dear ... the queer things he would do when he got mad! Said nothing but burned rugs and sawed up chairs! Prue Davis wears well, but she must be getting on. I always feel so sorry for the girls who are on the shelf at a time like this. They must feel it.

“Yes, that is one of the Blythe girls ... but it can’t be Diana ... she is one of the bridesmaids. The idea of having four bridesmaids at a quiet country

wedding! But Amy always had very large ideas.

“There’s old Mary Hamilton at the back of the church ... of course the eats are all in the hands of the Charlottetown caterers, worse luck. I’d rather take a chance with old Mary any day. But they say she made the wedding cake ... she and Susan Baker of Ingleside between them. Susan has a recipe I’m told she won’t give to anyone.

“Yes, Jim’s family have always made an absurd fuss over Mary, or Mollie as they call her sometimes. Why, when Jim got his first car nothing would do Mary but she must learn to drive it, too. And they actually let her! I’m told she’s been fined for speeding times without number. Oh, yes, Irish for a thousand years! It’s amazing how she took up with Susan Baker. You couldn’t imagine two people more unlike. She’s devoted to the bride and all that. At least people say so. But Mary knows on which side her bread is buttered ... and to those of us who know a little about Evelyn’s temper! Just look at her staring at everybody and gabbing to Susan Baker. I’ll bet there are some queer tales being told.

“If they don’t come soon I’ll be carried out screaming ... it’s ten minutes past the time now. Perhaps Evelyn has changed her mind! Or maybe D’Arcy has faded out of the picture like Elmer. You can say what you like but I’ll never believe he really cares much about Evelyn. *Look* at the Walter Starrocks! Will you ever forget the day *they* were married and him standing there with his coattails all over cat hairs? Walter is getting pouches under his eyes. Yes, it’s true we’re all getting on. But I fancy the life Ella Starrocks leads him ... you don’t mean to tell me you’ve never heard! Well, just remind me some day.

“There they come at last. I don’t care for those halo veils but Evelyn must always have the very latest fad. How is she going to indulge her expensive tastes on D’Arcy’s salary? That shade certainly doesn’t become Marnie. Diana Blythe looks very well in it, though. As for Rhea ... well, it doesn’t matter what *she* wears ... only it’s a pity to have the harmony spoiled, isn’t it? Marnie is the plain sister so she’ll make the best match, take my word for it. I don’t know why it is, but you’ll always see it. I suppose they’re not so particular.

“D’Arcy looks as if he’s carried Evelyn off from a hundred rivals instead of being Hobson’s choice. But of course he doesn’t know *that*. He’s positively ugly, I think ... except for his eyes ... but I believe the women

with the ugly husbands have the best of it. They don't have to be everlastingly scheming how to hold their man.

"Well, it really went off very well. I'm glad for Amy's sake ... she's so fussy over small things. No doubt she has been praying for fine weather every night for a month. I hear that Mrs. Blythe says she believes in prayer. Did you ever hear anything so funny in this day and age?"

Uncle Douglas March, thinking,

"Lot of lean women here. Never see anything of fine figures nowadays. That was back in the days when girls wore bangs and balloon sleeves ... and were the same girls underneath, as Dr. Blythe says. His wife is the best-looking woman here. Looks like a *woman*. The church is dolled up all right. I must take in all the fixings to tell ma. Too bad she couldn't have come. But rheumatism is rheumatism, as Dr. Blythe says.

"Some difference between this and my father's wedding. *His* dad gave him a fourteen-year-old horse and a two-year-old colt, a set of harness, a bobsled, and some provisions. He paid twenty dollars for his clothes, the minister and licence, bought some chairs, a table, and an old stove. *Her* dad gave her twenty-five dollars and a cow. Well, well, what do we work and slave for if it isn't to give the tads something better than the old folks had? And yet they don't seem any happier than we did. It's a queer old world.

"Here they come. Evelyn fills the eye all right. When she ain't in sight I can never believe she is as pretty as I remember her. That's Jim's nose ... a chip off the old block. Just as well ... though Amy is a nice old puss ... always liked her. Nice-looking boy Evelyn's got, too ... not too handsome ... but sort of dependable looking. Some dress! Ma was married in nun's veiling. Does anybody ever wear nun's veiling now? Such a pretty name ... and pretty stuff. Ah, it's times like this makes a body realize that he's no longer young. My day's over ... but I've had it ... I've had it.

"If there ain't old Mollie Hamilton back there, grinning like the frisky old girl she always was. She was a russet-haired jade when Amy got her ... one time when she was visiting the Island. Mary's grey as a badger now. They must have treated her well, the way she's stuck to them. They don't hatch her breed of cats nowadays. She always declared she would never marry ... you couldn't trust any man, she said. Well, she's kept her word.

Don't know but she was wise. There's mighty few men you can trust ... if I'm a man myself. Except Dr. Blythe now. I'd trust *that* man with my wife.

"Now for the spread. Though they don't have the wedding suppers we had in the good old days. 'Don't eat things you can't digest, pa,' ma told me. 'You can digest anything if you have the courage to, ma,' I told her. I heard Dr. Blythe say that once but ma didn't know it. Doesn't hurt a woman to think her man can say smart things. A pretty wedding ... yes, a pretty wedding. And a happy bride! I've lived long enough to know the real thing when I see it. By gum, I have. *They'll* stay married. Ma will have to read up about the wedding in the *Enterprise*. I couldn't ever do justice to it. Between the *Enterprise* and Mrs. Blythe she'll get a pretty good idea of it. Only I must warn Mrs. Blythe not to tell ma she saw me eating indigestible things. It's lucky she's a woman you can trust. They're few and far between. Dr. Blythe's a lucky man."

One of the guests, of a cynical turn of mind, thinking,

"H'm ... white mums and palms. They've done it very well ... though I did hear the mums came from the little Ingleside conservatory. And everybody is here who should be ... no end of relations ... and of course all the curious folks of the Glen and surrounding districts. I hope the groom won't be kissed to death ... though there's not so much of that nowadays, thank whatever gods there be. They've even got old Uncle Douglas from Mowbray Narrows. He's inside the ribbon so he's a guest. How they must have hated having him ... at least Amy! Jim always had a bit of family feeling ... but I doubt if Amy has any. Of course, he's Jim's uncle, not hers, but it would have been all the same. Poor Prue Davis ... smiling with her lips but not her eyes ... hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Odd ... I learned that verse in Sunday school fifty years ago. If only Prue knew how well off she was! Mothballs! Who in the world is smelling of mothballs at this time of year? Here they come ... Evelyn looks well ... her profile and eyelashes always carried her ... 'off with the old love and on with the new' ... engaged to Elmer Owen two months ago ... and now marrying a man she has hated all her life. Poor D'Arcy! I suppose all this flummery was really planned out for her wedding with Elmer, even to the dress. Amy looks worried. Well, *I* had to see both *my* daughters marry the wrong man.

"Marnie's quite sparkling ... she has got twice the pep Evelyn has but nobody ever looks twice at her when Evelyn is around. Maybe she'll have

a chance, now that Evelyn is going.

“Jim is doing everything very correctly ... a well-trained husband ... he was crazy about me before he met Amy. If I’d married him he’d have been more successful from a business point of view ... but would he have been so happy? I doubt it. I couldn’t have made him believe himself the wonder Amy has done. My sense of humour would have prevented it. We would likely have ended up in the divorce court.

“Does that minister spin out his sermons like that? He seems to have perfected the art of talking for fifty minutes and saying nothing. Not that I’m an authority on sermons, goodness knows. They say the Blythes go every Sunday. Habit is powerful. But they say there is some engagement between the families. I suppose they want to keep on good terms with each other.

“That stately old dowager in blue chiffon, with the old-fashioned pearls, must be D’Arcy’s mother. They say she has devoted her life to him ... and now she must hand him over to a chit of a girl. How she must hate Evelyn! Osler was right when he said everybody should be chloroformed at forty ... or was it sixty? Women anyhow. And isn’t it odd how women hate to give their sons up when they are always so glad to get their girls well married off?

“What a sight Rhea Bailey is! Those big gaunt girls should never wear flimsy dresses. But of course in this case she had no choice. It wouldn’t have mattered anyhow. Those Bailey girls never had any taste in dress.

“‘For better, for worse.’ That sounds wonderful ... but is there really such a thing as love in the world? We all believe it until we are twenty. Why, I used to believe it. Before I married Ramsay I used to lie awake at nights to think about him. Well, I did it after we were married, too, but not for the same reason. It was to wonder what woman he was with. I wonder how his new marriage is turning out. Sometimes I think I was a fool to divorce him. A home and position means a good deal.

“Well, it is over. Miss Evelyn March is Mrs. D’Arcy Phillips. I give them three years before the divorce ... or at least before they want one. Of course, D’Arcy’s bringing-up may prevent it. I don’t suppose the farmers of Mowbray Narrows get divorces very often. But I wonder how many, even of them, would marry the same woman over again? Dr. Blythe would, I really do believe ... but as for the rest! It’s just as that queer old Susan

Baker says, 'If you don't get married you wish you had ... and if you do you wish you hadn't.' But one likes to have had the chance."

The mother of the bride thinking, rather disconnectedly,

"I won't cry ... I've always said I wouldn't cry when my girls got married ... but *what* are we going to do without darling Evelyn? Thank goodness, Jim hasn't got in the wrong place ... Evie does look rather pale ... I *told* her she should make up a little ... but neither Jim nor D'Arcy like it. I remember I was a dreadful brick red when I was married ... of course, a bride who made up in those days would have been beyond the pale ... Marnie looks very well ... happiness becomes the child.

"How wonderfully everything has turned out! I never liked Evie's engagement to Elmer ... though he *is* such a dear boy ... I always felt somehow that her heart wasn't in it ... mothers *do* feel these things. But Marnie really loves him. It's too bad he couldn't have been here ... but of course it would have looked queer ... nobody would have understood ... and it would never do to announce the engagement yet.

"I've always loved D'Arcy ... he isn't rich but they won't be any poorer than Jim and I when we started out ... and Evie's a famous little cook and manager, thanks to dear Mary. It seems like yesterday that we had Evie's coming-out tea ... how sweet she was ... everybody said so ... just shy enough to really seem like a bud ... as they called them then.

"Patricia Miller and that artist son of hers are here after all. I do hope he won't be annoyed because we didn't hang the picture he sent as a gift. But nobody could really tell which side was up ... they do paint such extraordinary pictures nowadays.

"I hope the reception will go off nicely ... I hope nobody will notice the worn place in the hall carpet. And I hope the bills won't be too terrible. It was sweet of the Blythes to give us the mums ... but I didn't want all those roses in the reception room. But Jim was so determined his daughter should have a nice wedding. Dear Jim, he's always worshipped his girls. We've been very happy, he and I, though we've had our ups and downs ... even our quarrels. They say Dr. Blythe and his wife have never had a single quarrel ... but I don't believe *that*. Tiffs, anyhow. Everyone does.

"He's pronouncing them man and wife ... I won't cry ... *I won't*. It's bad enough to see Jim with tears in his eyes. I suppose people will think I've no feeling ..."

The mother of the groom, calmly reflecting,

“My darling boy! How well he looks! I don’t know if she is just the one I would have chosen for him ... she’s been brought up as a rich man’s daughter ... but if he is happy what does it matter? Susan Baker told me Mary Hamilton told her there was nothing she couldn’t do. If his dear father could have lived to see this day! I’m glad I decided on that Dutch walnut design in the dining room for my present. I had only one bridesmaid when I was married ... she wore a picture hat of white lace, with a dropping brim. Diana Blythe is the prettiest of all the bridesmaids. D’Arcy is kissing his wife ... *his wife* ... how strange that sounds! My little baby married! She has a sweet face ... she *does* love him ... I feel sure of that ... in spite of that engagement to Elmer Owen. There was something I didn’t understand ... I never will, I suppose ... but D’Arcy seemed quite satisfied about it, so I’m sure it’s all right. Oh, what would the world be without youth? And yet it passes so quickly. We are old before we know it. We never believe it ... and then some day we wake up and discover we are old. Ah me! But D’Arcy is happy ... that is all that matters now. And I believe it will last. Strange how they used to quarrel, though ... ever since the Marches began coming to Glen St. Mary, long before they built Merestead. D’Arcy’s father and I never quarrelled. But then we didn’t meet till we were grown up ... and it was love at first sight. Things *are* different nowadays, let them say what they will. I have no son now ... but if he is happy ...”

The father of the bride, thinking,

“My little girl looks very beautiful. A trifle pale ... but I never like a made-up bride. Thank heaven, decent skirts are in again. It doesn’t seem long since Amy and I were standing like that. Evie isn’t so pretty a bride as her mother was, after all. That dress becomes Amy ... she looks as young as any of them ... a wonderful woman. If I had to choose over again I’d make the same choice. There’s no one I could compare her to. I suppose we’ll soon have to face the loss of Marnie, too. Well, mother and I were alone once and I guess we can stand being alone again. Only ... we were young then ... that makes all the difference. But if the girls are happy ...”

The best man, thinking,

“You’ll never see me in a scrape like this ... though that little bridesmaid *is* cute ... slant eyes like a fairy’s ... twinkling like a little dark star ... but he travels the fastest who travels alone. The Blythe bridesmaid is a bit of a beauty ... but they tell me she’s bespoken. Bride looks a bit icy ... rather like a cool white nun. Wonder why D’Arcy’s so goofy about her. Seems to me I’ve heard something about another engagement. Hope he’s not just a consolation prize. The gods grant my shoes don’t creak when I’m going down the aisle like Hal Crowder’s did ... and that I won’t drop the wedding ring like Joe Raynor ... it rolled to the very feet of the girl the groom had jilted. They’ve done the decorations rather well for a country church.

“It’s over ... D’Arcy’s sewed up ... poor D’Arcy!”

Marnie March, the maid of honour, thinking,

“How lonesome it’s going to be without darling Evie! She’s always been so sweet to me. But I’ll have Elmer and that means all the world. I *can’t* understand how Evelyn could ever have preferred D’Arcy to him, but how thankful I am she did. I wish he wasn’t so rich ... people will say I’m marrying him for his money. Why, I’d jump at him if he hadn’t a cent in his pocket. D’Arcy’s a good egg. I think I’ll like him for a brother-in-law ... though I never could bear the way he laughs. He sounds so sneery. But I don’t think he means it. I wish Elmer could see me now. This periwinkle blue becomes me. Not so well as it does Diana Blythe, though. It needs hair of a different shade than mine. I wonder if she really is engaged to that Austin boy ... and if she loves him as I love Elmer. No, *that* is impossible.

“Oh, it’s dreadful ... and wonderful ... and heavenly to love anyone as I love Elmer. We Marches care so horribly when we do care! Those awful weeks when I thought he was going to marry Evie! And to think I ever called him a magazine-ad man! Oh, I hope I won’t get any fatter! I’ll take nothing but orange juice for breakfast after this. That *must* make some difference. Yet those Blythe girls eat anything they like and they are always as slim as a reed. It must be predestination.

“What a bombshell it would be if Elmer and I were getting married today, too, as he wanted. Of course it would never have done ... people would have talked their heads off ... it’s queer we can never do anything we really want to in this world for fear of what people will say! But

anyway I wanted to catch my breath after finding myself engaged to him. We won't have a fuss like this anyway ... I'm determined on that. Oh, how frightfully solemn the service is! 'Until death do us part.' We'll *mean* it. Does that make me thrill! Oh, Elmer!"

The groom, thinking,

"Will she really come after the beastly way I've always treated her? From the time we were kids and they had that little cottage at the end of our farm at the Narrows. I was just a jealous young idiot! I suppose Mollie's somewhere back there. God bless her! When I think what would have happened without her! *She's coming!* And I have to stand here like a stick instead of rushing to meet her and clasping her in my arms! Harry looks cool as a cucumber. But then he isn't marrying Evie. How beautiful Evie is! God help me to make her happy ... make me worthy of her ... I wish I'd been a better man ... it's over ... she's my wife ... *my wife!*"

The bride, thinking,

"Is this just some wonderful dream? Will I wake up presently and find I've got to marry Elmer? Oh, if anything were to happen yet to prevent it ... the minister dropping dead ... he doesn't look very robust. And to think D'Arcy always loved me when I thought he hated me! And the way I treated him! Oh, just suppose Mollie hadn't caught him!

"Marnie looks so sweet. I hope she'll be almost as happy a bride as I am. She couldn't be *quite* so happy, of course ... nobody could.

"How beautifully solemn this is! Oh, his voice saying 'I will' ... there, I hope everybody heard me. No bride in the world ever said it more gladly ... *I am his wife.*"

The Reverend John Meredith, thinking,

"I don't know why it is but I have a feeling that these two people I've just married are perfectly happy. What a pity one has this feeling so seldom. Well, I only hope they'll be as happy as Rosamond and I are."

Mary Hamilton, in a back seat, talking to her crony, Susan Baker,

"Sure, Susan, me dear, and one great advantage av the back sate is ye can be seeing iverybody and iverything without getting a crick in your neck. Evie, bless her heart, did be wanting me to sit up front wid the guests. There niver was any false pride about *her*. But I know me place better than that.

“There come the doctor and Mrs. Blythe. She do be looking like a girl for all her years.”

“She’s a girl at heart,” sighed Susan, “but she’s never been the same woman since Walter’s death.”

“Well, he died in a glorious cause. Me own niphe wint, too. It’s the proud and happy woman I am today, Susan Baker ...”

“I’m not wondering at that, if all I’ve heard is true. But you can’t believe all you hear.”

“No, nor one tinth av it. Well, I’ll be telling you the truth, Susan, if you promise me solemnly niver to breathe a word av it to a living soul. They told me that av you whin I began coming here ... how minny years ago?”

“Never mind,” said Susan, who didn’t care to be reminded of her age. “Just get on with your story before they come.”

“Well, Susan Baker, I’ve been seeing a miracle happen ... several av thim in fact.”

“It’s a miracle to be seeing Evie marry D’Arcy Phillips,” conceded Susan. “Everyone has always thought they detested each other.”

“Not iveryone, Susan ... not me. *I* always did be guessing the truth. As for the miracles, like iverything else they do be going by threes. Have ye iver noticed that?”

“To be sure I have.”

“Well, it’s little I was ixpecting innnything like this two months ago, wid me pet going to marry the wrong man and Marnie breaking her heart about it and iverything so crisscross I couldn’t aven belave the Good Man himself could be straightening it out.”

“So she *was* engaged to Elmer Owen? I heard it from several but no one seemed sure.”

“Av coorse she was ... but you’ll niver breathe a word av this, Susan ...”

“If Mrs. Dr. dear asks right out,” said Susan doubtfully.

“Well, I wouldn’t mind *her* knowing ... it’d be better than her hearing a whole lot of gossip. And they tell me she’s one that can hold her tongue.”

“No one tighter,” said Susan, “when anything important is at stake. She never told a soul about me and Whiskers-on-the-Moon.”

“She mightn’t have, but it got out somehow.”

“Oh well, you know what gossip is. And of course Whiskers couldn’t hold his tongue. He’s been accusing me ever since ...”

“What could you expect av a man? Well, to get back to me story. There niver was innystone but Evie for D’Arcy and don’t let innystone tell ye different, Susan Baker.”

“I won’t. But it is true they were always fighting from the time they were tads ...”

“And didn’t ye be telling me that Rilla and Kenneth Ford used to fight like cat and dog when they were small?”

“That was different,” said Susan hastily.

“Not a mite av difference. Kids always do be fighting. They’ve been in love wid each ither iver since they grew up only they didn’t be knowing it. That’s some folks’ way av coorting. They wouldn’t be fighting if they didn’t be caring.

“They begun it the first day they iver met, whin he was tin and she was siven and they were stopping at the Phillipses till the cottage was ready for them. She flung a big gob av mud at him bekase he was took up wid a liddle cousin av his that did be making eyes at him.”

“They begun it young in those days,” sighed Susan. “Maybe if my ma hadn’t said I must behave myself when the boys were round ... but it’s too late now ... and I’m content with my lot ... as long as I can work ...”

“Sure and they didn’t begin inny younger then than now. But if ye kape on interrupting me, Susan Baker ...”

“Go on. It’s only ... well, did ever any decent man ask you to marry him, Mary Hamilton?”

“Millions av them. At inny rate that’s what I always do be telling people who ask impertinent questions.”

“I was brought up to tell the truth,” said Susan proudly.

“Well, if ye don’t be wanting to hear me story ...”

“Go on,” said Susan resignedly.

“Well, he did be turning the hose on her in return for the gob. Oh, oh, the tithery-is we did be having wid both mothers scolding! And ivery summer the same whin we come to the Narrows. The way they did be fighting come to be a family joke. Thin her ma forbid her going up to the Phillips ...”

“Folks said she was too proud to associate with the country people, I remember,” interjected Susan.

“There’s a sample av lies for ye. There ain’t a woman on this airth that’s got less pride than Mrs. March.”

“Except Mrs. Dr. dear,” murmured Susan under her breath.

“D’Arcy used to spile her mud pies ... just bekase he did be thinking she was more interested in thim than in him as I knew very well ... and her knocking over his sandcastles for the same rason ... though she didn’t know it herself, the darlint.

“And no better whin they did be growing up ...”

“Kenneth and Rilla had more sense then,” murmured Susan. But she had learned not to interrupt Mary ... and she wanted to hear the rights of the story before the bridal party arrived.

“It was worse if innynthing ... with her mocking and twitting him and him sneering at her ... both av thim going white with jealousy whiniver ayther av thim looked at innynbody ilse. The tantrums they’d be taking! They wouldn’t be spaking to ache ither for wakes. Iverybody thought they hated ache ither ... iverybody excipt ould Mollie Hamilton, cooking in the kitchen and fading thim up whin they crept in for a snack whin they was on fair terms.”

“Just like Kenneth and Rilla,” thought Susan.

“Didn’t I be seeing how it was? Ould Mollie Hamilton isn’t blind even yet, Susan Baker. Him crazy mad about her, and her up to her pretty eyes in love wid him and thinking she was the last girl he’d iver look at. But thinks I to mesilf, ‘They’re young and it’ll all come right in the ind,’ and in the manetime better a clane fight than the moonlighting and flirting and ‘petting,’ as they called it, that wint on wid the rest av the summer fry. Sure and I used to laugh at the spitting and snarling av thim so much that I didn’t be nading a dose av medicine once a year.”

“Folks are made different,” reflected Susan Baker. “When any of the Ingleside children had a fight with the Fords or the Merediths I’d lie awake half the night, worrying over it. It was well the doctor and his wife had more sense. Mrs. Dr. dear used to say to me, ‘Children have been spatting like that all down through the ages.’ And I’m guessing she was right. Not that there was much of it in our crowd. But I remember how D’Arcy Phillips and Evelyn March used to fight. *They* tore up the turf when they went at it all right.”

“But in the ind, Susan, me dear, it didn’t be innny laughing matter: for they did have a terrible quarrel, though I niver found out what it was about. And D’Arcy wint off to college widout thim making it up. He niver come home for two years and it’s worried I was, don’t be talking. For the time was passing and though he couldn’t go to the war bekase av his short sight there was always heaps av ither boys around. And D’Arcy sich a gr-r-and young man by this time wid thim smoke-grey eyes av his. Evie hild her head high and pretinded she didn’t care but it’s me that did be knowing. And the years did be slipping, and her frinds marrying off, and the world getting big and lonely.”

“It’s well I know *that* sensation,” thought Susan. “I don’t know what would have become of me if I hadn’t got in with the Ingleside folks. The doctor likes to tease me about old Whiskers but now I’ve got over being mad at the old fool I can at least be saying there was one man wanted to marry me, whatever his reason was.”

“Thin last winter she ups and goes to Montreal for a visit and comes home ingaged to Elmer Owen.”

“Ah, now I’m going to hear the truth about that at last,” thought Susan triumphantly. “The yarns that have been going round would make you dizzy ... some saying she was and some she wasn’t ... and Mrs. Dr. dear telling me it wasn’t anybody’s business but their own. Maybe not ... but a body likes to know the truth.”

“Ye could have knocked me down wid a feather,” said Mary. “For I did be knowing only too well that she didn’t love him. And it wasn’t for his money ayther, Susan Baker.

“‘He’s my choice, Mollie,’ she sez grand-like ...”

“As I’d have said if I’d taken Whiskers,” thought Susan.

“‘Oh, oh, if ye have to choose him he’s not the right man for ye,’ sez I. ‘There’s no choosing wid the right man,’ sez I. ‘Ye jist *belong* ... like D’Arcy and yersilf,’ I’d have liked to add but I dassn’t.

“Av coorse iverone begun saying she was taking Elmer bekase he was a millionaire and talking av it as a wonderful match for her ... maybe ye heard some av the gossip, Susan Baker.”

“Some of it,” said Susan cautiously, who had heard it and believed it. “But they always say that when a girl marries a man with money.”

"I could have died with rage and spite, Susan Baker. I was all built up to hate me fine Elmer whin he come in June. But I couldn't kape it up for he was a rale nice liddle chap in spite av his money ..."

"Mrs. Dr. dear said he was one of the nicest men she had ever met and she thought Evelyn March was a very lucky girl."

"Ah, well, she weren't to blame, not knowing. We all liked him ... aven Evie. Marnie hild off a bit at first ... ah, there's the gr-r-and girl for ye, Susan Baker ..."

"I always liked her what little I've seen of her," admitted Susan, adding in thought, "She didn't put on the airs Evelyn did."

"Evie is by way av being my fav'rite bekase I looked after her whin she was a baby and her mother so sick."

"Just like me and Shirley," thought Susan.

"So she's always seemed like me own. But Marnie's a swate thing and whin she took to moping it worried me, Susan Baker."

"When Shirley had the scarlet fever I was like to have gone clean out of my head," said Susan. "But I always like to think I didn't fail Mrs. Dr. dear for all that. Night after night, Mary Hamilton ..."

"Marnie couldn't bear the talk av the wedding ... and me thinking it was bekase she felt so bad over Evie's going and maybe a bit sore at Elmer bekase he said, 'Hello, gypsy,' whin Evie introduced thim. 'Hello, magazine-ad man,' said Marnie. Sure and she was niver at a loss for an answer, whin people did be teasing her. It's the blind thing I was, Susan Baker, but whin ye look back on things ye can see thim as ye couldn't whin they was under yer nose."

"You never spoke a truer word in your life, Mary Hamilton," agreed Susan, wondering if Mary would ever come to the point of her story.

"Though I couldn't be putting me finger on what was missing. Innyway, iverything was smooth as crame on top and they got all their plans made and Elmer wint back to Montreal. And after he was gone I wint into Marnie's room to swape, thinking she was out, and there she was sitting, crying, Susan Baker ... crying so pretty ... no noise ... only just the big tears rolling down her nice liddle brown chakes."

"The way Mrs. Dr. dear cries," thought Susan. "It's the real way of crying. I remember when Shirley ... and Walter ..."

“‘Darlint, what do be the matter?’ sez I in a bit av a panic. It was sich an uncommon thing to see Marnie cry. ‘Oh, nothing much,’ sez she, ‘only I’m in love with the man me sister is going to marry ... and I’m to be her maid of honour ... and I wish I was dead,’ sez she.

“Was I tuk aback, Susan Baker!”

“Like I was when Rilla brought the baby home in the soup tureen,”* thought Susan. “Will I ever be forgetting that day!”

“Nothing,” continued Mary, “could I think av saying, only stupid-like, ‘There’s a lot av min in the world, me darlint. Why be getting in sich a pother over one?’

“‘Bekase he’s the only one for me,’ sez me poor Marnie.”

“Old maid as I am I could have told you she would say that,” said Susan.

“‘But ye nadn’t worry,’ sez Marnie ... as if a body could help worrying. ‘Evelyn isn’t going to know this ... or aven suspect it. Oh, oh, Mollie,’ sez she, getting reckless like, ‘whin I first saw him I said, ‘Magazine-ad man,’ and now I could kiss his shoes! But no one’ll iver know it excipt you, Mollie, and if you iver tell I’ll slaughter you in cold blood.’ So I shouldn’t be retelling you, Susan Baker, and me conscience ...”

“Now, never mind your conscience, Mary Hamilton. Marnie was meaning her own class and anyhow everything has changed since then. She wouldn’t be minding now,” said Susan, rather guiltily but consoling herself that she would never breathe a word of it to a living soul.

*See *Rilla of Ingleside*.

“Tell, was it?” Mary Hamilton was too wrapped up in her tale to listen to Susan Baker’s interruptions. “If I could have done inny good be telling I’d have shouted it from the housetops. But I couldn’t, so I hild me tongue. And thin, on top of all that, comes me fine D’Arcy, raging mad, as I could very well be telling, but as cold as ice.

“I did be hearing it all as they fought it out on the verandy. Not that I did be listening av purpose, Susan Baker, but whin people are as close to ye as they were to me ye can’t be hilping hearing what they do be saying.

“Short and swate it was.

“‘Are ye going to sell yersilf for money? I’ll not belave it till I hear it from yer own lips,’ sez he.

“‘I’m going to marry Elmer Owen,’ sez Evelyn politely, ‘and I happen to love him, Mr. Phillips.’ ‘Ye lie,’ sez D’Arcy ... not over-polite now, was it, Susan Baker. And Evie sez, icier than himsilf and white wid rage, ‘Git out av me sight, D’Arcy Phillips, and stay out av it.’”

“When the upper crust get quarrelling there isn’t much difference between us,” thought Susan. “That sounds just like something Whiskers-on-the-Moon might have said in one of his tantrums.”

“‘I’ll take ye at yer word,’ sez D’Arcy. ‘I’m going to New York tonight’ ... he was interning there for a year, whatever that may mean ... ‘and ye’ll niver see me again, Evelyn March.’ Did ye iver be hearing the like?”

“Many’s the time,” said Susan.

“Well, wid that he wint. And me poor pet comes inty the kitchen and looks at me, still holding her head high, but wid a face like death. ‘He’s gone, Mollie,’ she said, ‘and he’ll niver come back. And I wish I was dead.’

“‘Do ye be wanting him to come back?’ sez I. ‘No lies now, me pet. A lie do be a refuge I’m not blaming innny woman for taking betimes ... ’”

“The times I’ve said I didn’t care whether I ever got married or not,” reflected Susan. “Except to Mrs. Dr. dear. I could never tell a lie to her somehow.”

“‘... but this is too serious for it. Iverything’s snarled up and I’m going to straighten it out wid a jerk, but I’m wanting to know where I stand first.’

“‘I *do* want him back ... and he’s the only one I’ve iver loved or iver will love,’ sez she ... as if I didn’t know that and always had been knowing av it! ‘There’s the truth for ye at last. But it’s too late. His train laves in fifteen minutes. I wudn’t give in ... me pride wouldn’t let me ... and he’s gone ... he’s gone! And innnyhow he’s always hated me!’

“I’d picked that day to clane me oil stove, Susan Baker, and was I be way av being a sight! But I had no time to change inty me latest from Paris. Out I wint to the garage ... thank Hiven the little runabout was there!

“I tuk a pace off the garage door as I backed out and just shaved the lily pond. But me only worry was cud I be getting to the station afore the train wint. Niver cud I do it by the highway but there did be a witch’s road I knew av.”

“The shortcut by the Narrows road,” thought Susan. “It hasn’t been used for years. I thought it was closed up. But to a woman like Mollie Hamilton ...”

“Down the highway I wint at the rate av no man’s business ...”

“The doctor said he’d met her and never had such a narrow escape from a head-on collision in his life,” thought Susan.

“Didn’t I be thanking Hiven there wasn’t any speed cops in this part av the Island ... and niver before did I be having the satisfaction av hitting it up to siventhy. Just afore I rached me side cut what did I be seeing but a big black cat, looking as if he intinded to cross the road and me heart stood still. I do be supposing ye think I’m a superstitious ould fool, Susan Baker ...”

“Not me,” said Susan. “I don’t know that I hold much with black cats ... though I remember one crossed me path the evening before we heard of Walter’s death ... but never mind that. Dreams, now, are different. While the Great War was going on there was a Miss Oliver boarding at Ingleside. And the dreams that girl would have! And every one came true. Even the doctor ... but as for the cats we can all be having our own opinion of them. Did I ever tell you the story of our Jack Frost?”

“Yis ... but I did be thinking it was my story ye was wanting to hear ...”

“Yes ... yes ... go on,” said Susan repentantly.

“Well, ayther luck was wid me or the Ould Scratch had business for him somewhere ilse for he turned around and wint back and I slewed round inty me cut.

“’Twas be way av being a grand ride, Susan Baker. Niver will I be knowing the like again I’m thinking. I skimmed over a plowed field and tore through a brook and up a muddy lane and through the backyard av the Wilson farmhouse. I’m swearing I motored slap inty a cow though where she wint whin I struck her I’ll niver be telling ye ...”

“I can be telling you,” said Susan. “She wasn’t much hurt except for a bit of skin or two, but she went clean off her milk and if the doctor hadn’t talked Joe Wilson round ... or even then if the Wilsons’ bill had ever been paid ... he’d have made all the trouble he could for you.”

“I slipped through the haystacks and I wint right over an acre of sparrow grass wid no bumps to spake av ... and thin up looms a spruce hedge and a wire fince beyant it. And I did be knowing I had a few minutes to spare.

“I mint to stop and rin for it ... the station was just on the other side ... but I was a bit ixcited like ... and did be putting me foot on the accelerator instid av the brake ...”

“Thank the Good Man above I’ve resisted all temptation to learn to drive a car,” thought Susan piously.

“I wint slap through the hedge ...”

“Sam Carter vowed he never saw such a sight in his life,” said Susan.

“... and the fince and bang inty the ind av the station. But the hedge and the fince had slowed me up a bit and no rale harm was done to the station.

“D’Arcy was jist stepping on the train ...”

“Ah, now we’re coming to the exciting part,” thought Susan.

“Everybody has been wondering what she said to him.”

“I grabbed him by the arm and I sez ...”

“Both arms,” thought Susan.

““D’Arcy Phillips, Evelyn do be breaking her liddle heart for you and ye get straight back to her ... and if I iver hear av any more jawing and fighting betwane ye, I’ll give ye both a good spanking, for it’s clane tired I am av all yer nonsinse and misunderstanding. It’s time ye both grew up.””

“Do people ever grow up?” reflected Susan. “The doctor and Mrs. Blythe are the only people I know of who really seem to have grown up. Certainly Whiskers-on-the-Moon didn’t. How he run.” And Susan reflected with considerable satisfaction upon a certain pot of boiling dye which the said Whiskers-on-the-Moon had once narrowly escaped.

““Not a yap out av ye,’ sez I, wid considerable severity.”

“They say she nearly shook the bones out of his skin,” thought Susan, “though nobody had any idea why.”

““Just be doing as you’re told,’ sez I.

“Well, Susan Baker, ye can be seeing for yersilf today what come av it. The insurance company was rale rasonable.”

“And lucky for poor Jim March they were,” thought Susan.

“But ye haven’t heard the whole wonder. Whin Evie told Elmer she couldn’t iver be marrying him bekase she was going to marry D’Arcy Phillips didn’t we be looking for a tithery-i! But he tuk it cool as a cowcumber and sez, sez he ... what do ye be thinking he said, Susan Baker?”

"I could never guess what any man said or thought," said Susan. "But I think I hear them coming ..."

"Well, he did be saying, 'He's the brother-in-law I'd have picked.'

"She didn't know what he was maning. But he turned up the nixt wake wid his fine blue car and its shining wire wheels. And I've been hearing that the moment he did be seeing Marnie, whin he came to plan the widding wid Evie, he knew he's made a mistake, but he was too much av a gintleman to let on. He'd have gone through it widout moving a single hair if he'd had to."

"Maybe not if he'd known that Marnie had fell in love with him, too," said Susan. "It is them ... Well, I'm obliged to you for telling me the rights of the affair, Mary, and if there's anything you'd like to know ... if it doesn't concern the family at Ingleside ... I'll be right glad to tell you."

"Here they come, Susan Baker ... sure and me pet lights up the church, doesn't she? It'll be long afore it sees a prettier bride."

"That depends on how long it is before Nan and Jerry Meredith get married," thought Susan. "Though Nan always declares she'll never be married in the church. The Ingleside lawn for her, she says. I'm thinking she's right ... there's too much chance for gossip at these church weddings."

"And now we'll shut up our yaps, Susan Baker, until they're married safe and sound ...

"That do be a load lifted from me mind. Will ye be coming home wid me, Susan, and having a cup av tay in me kitchen? And I'll see ye get a sight av the prisints. They're elegant beyant words. Did ye iver see a happier bride? It's mesilf that's knowing there niver was a happier one."

"I'd like anyone to say that to Mrs. Dr. dear, or Rilla for that matter," thought Susan. Aloud,

"He's a bit poor, I'm hearing."

"Poor is it? Have sinse, Susan Baker. I'm telling ye they're rich beyant the drames av avarice. Young ... and ..."

"An old maid like myself is not supposed to know much about such things," said Susan with dignity. "But maybe you're right, Mary Hamilton ... maybe you're right. One can learn a good deal from observation in this world, as Rebecca Dew used to say. And the doctor and Mrs. Blythe were poor enough when they started out. Ah, them happy days in the old House

of Dreams,* as they used to call it! It grieves me to the heart they'll never return. Thank you, Mary, but I must be getting back to Ingleside. I have duties there. I'll have a cup of tea with you some other day when things have quieted down. And I'm real thankful to you for telling me the rights of the whole story. If you knew ... the gossip ..."

*See *Anne's House of Dreams*.

"Sure and I can be guessing," said Mary. "But take my advice, Susan Baker, and larn to drive a car. Ye can niver tell whin the knack'll come in handy."

"At my age! That *would* be a sight. No," said Susan firmly. "I'll trust to my own two legs as long as they'll carry me, Mary Hamilton."

The Third Evening

THE PARTING SOUL

*Open the casement and set wide the door
For one out-going
Into the night that slips along the shore
Like a dark river flowing;
The rhythmic anguish of our sad heart's beating
Must hinder not a soul that would be floating.*

*Hark, how the voices of the ghostly wind
Cry for her coming!
What wild adventurous playmates will she find
When she goes roaming
Over the starry moor and misty hollow? ...
Loosen the clasp and set her free to follow.*

*Open the casement and set wide the door ...
The call is clearer!
Than we whom she has loved so well before
There is a dearer
When her fond lover Death for her is sighing
We must now hold her with our tears from dying.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- "I am going to forbid your writing that kind of poetry,
Anne. I've seen too many deaths ..."

SUSAN:- “And did you ever see one who died when there was no door or window open, doctor? Oh, yes, you may call it a superstition but take notice from now on.”

ANNE, *in a low voice*:- “Walter wrote the first two verses just before he ... went away. I ... I thought I would like to finish it.”

MY HOUSE

*I have built me a house at the end of the street
Where the tall fir trees stand in a row,
With a garden beside it where, purple and gold,
The pansies and daffodils grow:
It has dear little windows, a wide, friendly door
Looking down the long road from the hill,
Whence the light can shine out through the blue summer dusk
And the winter nights, windy and chill
To beckon a welcome for all who may roam ...
'Tis a darling wee house but it's not yet a home.*

*It wants moonlight about it all silver and dim,
It wants mist and a cloak of grey rain,
It wants dew of the twilight and wind of the dawn
And the magic of frost on its pane:
It wants a small dog with a bark and a tail,
It wants kittens to frolic and purr,
It wants saucy red robins to whistle and call
At dusk from the tassels of fir:
It wants storm and sunshine as day follows day,
And people to love it in work and in play.*

*It wants faces like flowers at the windows and doors,
It wants secrets and follies and fun,
It wants love by the hearthstone and friends by the gate,
And good sleep when the long day is done:
It wants laughter and joy, it wants gay trills of song
On the stairs, in the hall, everywhere,
It wants wooings and weddings and funerals and births,
It wants tears, it wants sorrow and prayer,
Content with itself as the years go and come ...*

Oh, it needs many things for a house to be home!

Walter Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “Curiously like your poem ‘The New House’ in spirit,
Anne. Yet I don’t suppose he meant it to be so.”

DIANA:- “No, he was really describing Ingleside. He showed me that
poem before he went ... away.”

MEMORIES

*A window looking out to sea
Beneath a misty moon,
Witch-gold of dropping poplar leaves,
Or blue of summer noon,
A murmur of contented bees
In neighbourly acquainted trees.*

*A salt wind keening in the night
Across the harbour rim,
Through the dark cloister of the pines
And the uncertain, dim
White birches in the meadow far,
Where silences and whispers are.*

*A little gate, a winding path ...
Through fern and mint and bay,
The muted beam of breakers on
The sands of fading day.
Soft amber dusk along the shore,
A voice that I shall hear no more.*

Anne Blythe

DR. BLYTHE, *thinking*:-“There are no pines about here or Avonlea so that Anne has drawn on her imagination for them ... or spruces wouldn’t rhyme well. But she gets the birches into almost every poem she writes. I don’t wonder. They are beautiful trees. Every line of that poem has a memory for me.”

SUSAN, *thinking while brushing away a tear over her darning*:-“She was thinking of Walter when she wrote that last line. I must not let her see me crying. As for the bees, they are queer creatures.

My grandfather made a living keeping them and never got stung in his life. While my grandmother couldn't go near a hive but she got stung. I must not think of these things or I will be crying like a baby."

A Commonplace Woman

It had been raining all day ... a cold, drizzling rain ... but now the night had fallen and the rain had partially ceased, though the wind still blew and sighed. The John Anderson family were sitting in the parlour ... they still called it that ... of the ugly house on the outskirts of Lowbridge, waiting for their great-aunt Ursula, who was dying in the room overhead, to die and have done with it.

They would never have expressed it like that but each one in his or her secret soul thought it.

In speech and outward behaviour they were all quite decorous, but they were all seething with much impatience and some resentment. Dr. Parsons supposed he ought to stay till the end because old Aunt Ursula was his grandfather's cousin, and because Mrs. Anderson wanted him to stay.

And he could not as yet afford to offend people, even distant relatives. He was just starting to practise in Lowbridge and Dr. Parker had been *the* doctor in Lowbridge for a long time. Almost everyone had him except a few cranks who did not like him and insisted on having Dr. Blythe over from Glen St. Mary. Even most of the Andersons had him. In Dr. Parsons' eyes they were both old men and ought to give the younger men a chance.

But at all events, he meant to be very obliging and do all he could to win his way. One had to, these days. It was all very well to talk about unselfishness but that was the bunk. It was every man for himself.

If he could win Zoe Maylock ... apart from all considerations of love ... and Dr. Parsons imagined he was wildly in love with the acknowledged belle of Lowbridge ... it would help him quite a bit. The Maylocks were rather a run-down old family, but they had considerable influence in Lowbridge for all that. *They* never had Dr. Parker either. When any of

them were sick they sent for Dr. Blythe. There was some feud between the Andersons and the Parkers. How those feuds lasted!

Dr. Parker might laugh and pretend he didn't care but the young doctor thought he knew better. Human nature was better understood nowadays than when poor old Dr. Parker went to college.

Anyhow, young Dr. Parsons meant to be as obliging as he could. Every little helped. It would be some time yet before his practice would justify him in marrying, confound it. He even doubted if the John Andersons would pay his bill ... and it seemed the old girl who took so long in dying had no money. They said Dr. Blythe ... and even Dr. Parker sometimes, though he was more worldly-minded ... attended poor people for nothing. Well, *he* was not going to be such a fool. He had come to old Ursula because he wanted to ingratiate himself with the Andersons, some of whom were well off enough yet. And cut out Dr. Blythe if it were possible ... though it was wonderful what a hold that man had on the countryside, even if he was getting along in years. People said he had never been the same since his son was killed in the Great War.

And now another war was on and they said several of his grandsons were going ... especially a Gilbert Ford who was in the R.C.A.F. People were constantly dropping hints that they thought *he* ought to volunteer. Even Zoe at times seemed to have entirely too much admiration for this aforesaid Gilbert Ford. But it was all nonsense. There were plenty of ne'er-do-wells to go.

Meanwhile he would do what he could for a poor, run-down family like the John Andersons. The progenitors of the said Andersons had, so he had been told, once been rich and powerful in the community. The biggest stone in the Lowbridge cemetery was that of a certain David Anderson. It was moss-grown and lichened now but it must have been considered some stone in its day.

He seemed to recall some queer yarn about the same David and his funeral ... old Susan Baker at Glen St. Mary had told it to a crony. But likely it was mere gossip. Old Susan was getting childish. People said the Blythes of Ingleside kept her there merely out of charity. No doubt the yarn was only gossip. There was no love lost, he had heard, between the Bakers and the Andersons ... though *that* feud, too, was almost ancient history, as Mrs. Blythe of Ingleside called it. It was her son who had been

killed in the Great War ... and another one had been crippled. She had three sons go, so it had been said. Young fools!

But the survivors were old men now ... at least callow young Dr. Parsons thought they were. One of the sons of one of them was also thought to have a liking for Zoe. She was very popular. But he thought he had the inside track ... not to mention the fact that it was whispered that Dr. and Mrs. Blythe had no great liking for the affair. And gossip again ... confound it ... said he had dropped Zoe because she had once laughed at Susan Baker. Or was it Gilbert Ford?

Well, it didn't matter. The whole yarn was unlikely. As if any man in his senses would "drop" Zoe Maylock! Even Gilbert Ford with his Toronto airs!

Well, thank goodness ... young Dr. Parsons stole a sly look at his watch ... old Ursula Anderson was dead ... or as good as dead. He was sure the John Andersons in their secret souls would be very glad ... and he did not blame them in the least. Trouble and expense was all she had meant to them for years. Though she had earned her way as a dressmaker until late in life, he understood. The idea made him laugh secretly. It was more than funny to think of anyone wearing a dress made by Ursula Anderson, he thought. The wearer must have looked as if she had stepped out of one of those awful faded photo-graphs or crayon enlargements he was so often called upon to admire.

Would that old woman overhead *ever* die? He wished he had invented some excuse for going long ago. One could carry obligation too far. And it was too late to go to Zoe now. Perhaps Walter Blythe ... named after his uncle, of course ... had been spending the evening with her. Well, let the best man win! Dr. Parsons had little doubt who it would be. Zoe might be angry ... or pretend to be ... but a doctor could always think up a good excuse. And Gilbert Ford, of whom he was secretly more afraid than of Walter Blythe, had gone back to Toronto.

Zoe, with her wonderful eyes and lovely white hands and cooing voice! It seemed so absurd to think that Zoe and old Aunt Ursula belonged to the same sex.

Well, they didn't ... they couldn't ... that was all there was about it. Ursula Anderson could never have been a young girl, with softly curving flesh and ripe lips. If it had not been for Mrs. Anderson's fussiness he

might just as well have spent the evening with Zoe instead of sitting here in this stuffy Anderson room, waiting for a tiresome old woman, who had never been of the slightest importance to anyone, to die, and wondering how on earth Mrs. Anderson managed to live with such a carpet in the house.

He fell to planning the house he and Zoe would have if ... when ... he won her. There was nothing in Lowbridge that suited him ... he would have to build. A house something like Ingleside ... more up-to-date, of course. Though it was strange how up-to-date Ingleside always seemed. Dr. Parsons had to admit that. Nor could he tell just why. Was it because it was generally overflowing with children? No, it was just the same when it was empty. Well, he and Zoe would have the very latest in everything, at all events. As for children ... they would have to wait a while for them. Big families had gone out of fashion with many other things. *And*, thank heaven, such carpets!

Mrs. John Anderson was really very proud of her carpet ... which a Charlottetown uncle had given her from an out-of-date stock. But just now she was feeling very fretful and irritable. It was such an inconvenient time for Aunt Ursula to go and die, with Emmy's wedding to be planned and Phil's outfit for Queen's to be got ready. And all the expense of the funeral. Well, people would just have to wait for their bills. Dr. Parsons, now. Of course they had to have him because he was a distant relative. But she would much rather have had Dr. Blythe from Glen St. Mary ... or even old Dr. Parker. What did old quarrels matter now? And why was Dr. Parsons hanging round when he could do no good? Of course she had asked him to out of politeness ... but he must have known he wasn't wanted.

And Aunt Ursula was so maddeningly deliberate about dying. Well, she had been that about everything all her life. Likely that was why she had never got a husband. Men liked girls with some dash to them.

She might even live till morning ... she had known a woman who lived for a week after the doctor had said she could only last a few hours. Doctors knew very little after all. She had told John they should have an older doctor. None of them might get a wink of sleep that night and John was half dead now, he had been up so many nights. You couldn't trust Maggie McLean. And of course she had to have some sleep.

To be sure, John was at present snoring on the sofa. It wasn't just the proper thing, she supposed, but she hadn't the heart to wake him. If that goof of a Dr. Parsons only had enough sense to go she might get a wink, too.

As for Emmy and Phil, they had been looking forward so delightedly to Bess Rodney's dance tonight. And now they hadn't been able to go after all. No wonder they were disgruntled, poor darlings! And what earthly difference would it have made to anyone? Talk about gossip! It was the most powerful thing in the world and always would be.

Mrs. Anderson yawned and hoped Dr. Parsons would take the hint. But he showed no signs of doing so. An older doctor would have had more gumption.

She wondered drowsily if there was really anything between him and Zoe Maylock. If there was she pitied him. Everyone knew what Zoe's temper was. Dr. and Mrs. Blythe had done well to stop Walter's going there. As for Gilbert Ford, everyone said he was engaged to a girl in Toronto and was just amusing himself with Zoe Maylock. Thank goodness, Phil was of a different type. *He* was not a flirt. And if he had a bit of the Anderson temper he knew how to control it. She supposed she ought to go up and see if Maggie McLean had fallen asleep. But she might wake poor John.

Emmy and Phil Anderson were very much disgruntled. It seemed positively absurd to them that they had to stay home from the dance because old Great-aunt Ursula was dying. She was eighty-five and for fifteen years she had been exactly the same ... an ugly old woman who hardly ever talked, though she was given to mumbling when she was alone. She belonged to a dead and forgotten generation ... the generation of those dreadful crayon enlargements on the walls which mother wouldn't have taken down ... pictures of bearded gentlemen and high-collared women. *They* could never have been human either, Emmy reflected.

But at least they were dead and out of the way. How very stern and proper Grandfather Anderson looked, the embodiment of unbending rectitude, whose great pride had been that there had never been any scandal in the Anderson family. And yet hadn't she heard something about his brother, David Anderson? *He* had not been a model, according to Susan Baker. But it was all old stuff. Who cared now? They had been Aunt

Ursula's brothers. How funny to think of Aunt Ursula having brothers! She couldn't imagine her feeling any family affection.

"I'm sure she has never liked any of us," thought Emmy. "And we have been so good to her!"

Uncle Alec, who had come in from his farm at Glen St. Mary because it was the proper thing to do, was the only one who was not bored. He rather enjoyed occasions like these, though of course it would never have done to admit it. How many things it would never do to admit!

But you couldn't deny that there was something "dramatic" about deaths and funerals. To be sure, there was nothing very dramatic about poor old Aunt Ursula's death, any more than there had been about her life. Her sisters had been gay enough in their youth, if gossip spoke truly, but Ursula had been the quiet, retiring one.

Still, death was death: and the night with its wailing winds and its vicious spits of rain was quite in keeping with it. Uncle Alec always thought that a moonlit summer night, with flower fragrances, was very incongruous with death. Though people died every day and night of the year, if it came to that.

John and Katherine were calm and dignified as became the occasion ... at least, John had been before he went to sleep. But the young folks couldn't quite hide that they were jittery with impatience. He didn't blame them. Of course it never occurred to them that *they* would die sometime, too.

But Aunt Ursula wouldn't die till the tide went out. She had been brought up by the sea and when you had lived by the sea for eighty-five years you couldn't die till the tide went out, no matter how far away from it you were. He had heard Dr. Parker laughing at that "old superstition" ... Dr. Blythe had not laughed but Uncle Alec knew he did not believe in it either.

"If he'd kept records he'd know," murmured Uncle Alec.

Ursula was quite a ways from the sea now but that didn't matter a mite.

"Think of being an old maid for eighty-five years," said Emmy suddenly. She shuddered.

"Poisonous," agreed Phil.

"Children," said their mother rebukingly. "Remember she is dying."

"What difference does that make?" said Emmy impatiently.

“You must remember she wasn’t always an old maid,” said Uncle Alec. “They used to say twenty-five was the first corner. But Aunt Ursula has always been just a commonplace woman ... a forgotten woman ...” He liked the phrase. People were always talking about the “forgotten man.” Why not a forgotten woman? She was a creature even more to be pitied ... and despised. For Uncle Alec despised old maids. And it was said Aunt Ursula had never even had a beau. Though he really did not know much about her. After all, she was only a poor old soul about whom nobody ever talked. Certainly she did not rouse gossip. And she *was* a little long in dying. But of course the tide was late tonight. He almost envied John his nap. Poor John! He had made rather a mess of things. Most of the Andersons made money if they made nothing else. Old Uncle David now ... he had been a rich man in his day. But his son had soon made ducks and drakes of his inheritance. It was generally the way. And he remembered the queer stories that were afloat when Uncle David died. Who in the world had started them? He had been a most irreproachable character.

“If I had to live a dull colourless life like Aunt Ursula,” said Emmy, “I’d kill myself.”

“Emmy!” said Uncle Alec rebukingly. “That is a wicked speech. We have to wait until our time comes.”

“I don’t care,” went on Emmy flippantly. Who cared what Uncle Alec thought or said? There was no need of his being there at all. “Eighty-five years and never a thing happen to you! Dad says she never had a beau, as he calls it. Well, of course, you couldn’t imagine anyone ever being in love with her ... you simply couldn’t.”

“You can’t imagine any old person being in love,” said Uncle Alec. “Me, now. You know in your heart you think just the same of me. Yet I was quite a gay blade in my youth. You’ll be old yourself some day, Emmy, and people will think the same of you. Perhaps Aunt Ursula did have some beaus.”

“Not she.” Emmy shrugged her shoulders. How dreadful never to have been loved! Never to have known love!

“She just spent her life in other people’s houses sewing, till she got so queer and old-fashioned nobody would have her. I wonder they ever did. Fancy Aunt Ursula making dresses! I never saw her do any sewing except patching trousers. She did enough of that, poor old soul.”

“Oh, I believe she wasn’t a bad dressmaker in her day,” said Uncle Alec. “Twenty years from now your fashions will seem just as funny.”

“People won’t have any fashions twenty years from now,” grinned Phil. “They won’t be wearing clothes at all.”

“Phil!” said his mother in absent rebuke. She didn’t believe in Alec’s nonsense about the tide but certainly old Aunt Ursula ... perhaps Maggie had fallen asleep. She supposed she ought to go up and see. But her bones ached enough now with rheumatism. As for the old maid talk, she didn’t like it. *She* had been an old maid when John married her.

“Aunt Ursula was the best hand at a sponge cake I ever knew,” said Uncle Alec.

“What an epitaph!” said Emmy.

Dr. Parsons laughed. But her mother rebuked her again, because she thought it was her duty. Yet she had quite a pride in Emmy’s way of saying things.

“She is dying,” said Uncle Alec, because he felt he ought to say it.

“And taking hours about it,” grumbled Phil. “Oh, I know your theories about the tide, Uncle Alec, but I don’t believe in them. Dr. Parsons, haven’t you seen scores of people die when the tide was coming in?”

“I don’t believe I’ve ever thought about it,” evaded Dr. Parsons. “I suppose, Phil, you hold with Osler’s theory that everyone should be chloroformed at sixty?”

“Well, it would rid the world of a lot of nuisances,” yawned Phil.

“Phil, I won’t have you talk so. *I* will be sixty in three more years,” said his mother severely.

“Can’t you take a joke, mums?”

“Not with death in the house,” said Mrs. Anderson, still more severely.

“What do *you* think of the Osler idea, doc?” said Phil.

“I don’t think he really said just that,” said Dr. Parsons. “What he did say was that a man’s best work was over at sixty. Of course there are exceptions. You and I are still far enough from sixty not to have to worry about that,” he added, remembering that John Anderson and this queer old Uncle Alec were both over sixty. One must not offend people. Sometimes they remembered the smallest things when they wanted a doctor.

Phil subsided. After all, there was nothing to do but wait. It couldn’t last forever. Aunt Ursula would die and be buried ... as cheaply as possible.

And then let the under-taker whistle for his bill. Parsons, too, for that matter. Aunt Ursula would be taken out of the house for the first time in ten years and buried in the Anderson plot ... there would just be room to squeeze her in. And there was room on one of the monuments to say when she had been born and when she had died.

God, what an existence! But that was all there was to say about her life. She probably had never had enough pep in her to be rebellious at it. People of her generation accepted every-thing as the will of God, didn't they? They just vegetated. And why did *they* have to take her in when she ceased to have earning power? There were plenty of richer Anderson families. But they had never given a cent to her keep. Well, he, Phil, was not going to be such a sap. When he got old there would be no useless relatives hanging round *his* neck. The poorhouse for them, if they hadn't enough to keep them. He felt sure Dr. Parsons would agree with him ... though he didn't have any especial liking for the fellow.

"It's strange what a liking that old dog has for Aunt Ursula," said the doctor abruptly, partly by way of making conversation. He didn't care much for Phil, and was certainly not going to argue about Osler's theories with him.

Somehow, he couldn't say, "It is strange how that old dog loves her." Imagine even a dog loving Ursula Anderson! It was comical. Probably she had given him bones. "He will hardly leave the room for a minute. He just lies by her bed and stares at her."

"She always seemed glad to have him near her ever since he was a pup," said Uncle Alec. "I suppose she felt he was a sort of protection for her when she was alone. She was alone a good deal."

"Well, I'm sure we couldn't stay home *all* the time," said Mrs. Anderson peevishly. "She was quite well ... and she said she didn't want company."

"I know ... I know," said Uncle Alec soothingly. "You've all been very kind to Aunt Ursula, Kathie."

"I should hope so," said Mrs. Anderson in an aggrieved tone. "I know we took her in and gave her a home when others on whom she had more claim, one would suppose, never even offered her a week's lodging."

"She was a very fortunate woman to have such a good home to come to in her old age," said Dr. Parsons placatingly. "I ... I suppose ... she won't

leave much behind her.” He was thinking about his bill.

“She won’t leave anything,” said Mrs. Anderson, still preserving her aggrieved tone. “She has never had a cent since she came to live with us ...” (“Otherwise you wouldn’t have taken her in,” thought the doctor sarcastically.) “It surprised us, I will admit. She must have made a good deal of money in all those years she sewed. What did she do with it? That is the question the Andersons have always been asking. Certainly she never spent any of it on herself. I never remember seeing her in a decent rag even when I was a little girl and she was no more than middle-aged ... though, of course, like all young people” ... with a resentful glance at Emmy and Phil ... “I thought anyone ten years older than myself was Methuselah.”

“Perhaps she had a hoard of it somewhere,” suggested Phil. “What a jolly thing it would be to come across a box or roll of it when we go through her things!”

Mrs. Anderson, who had “gone through” old Aunt Ursula’s few “things” many times, frowned majestically. What a thing to say before Dr. Parsons! Of course he would tell Zoe Maylock and that was equivalent to telling all the countryside. She would give Phil a good talking-to when she got him alone. Though what good would that do now that it had been said?

“Maybe I shouldn’t say it, but I’ve always thought she may have helped Brother Will out a bit,” said Uncle Alec, with a deprecatory glance at the doctor. It was not just the thing, maybe, to hint that any Anderson was hard up, even before a distant relative. “He had a big family so you know he was chronically hard up.”

“Then some of *his* family should have looked after Aunt Ursula when she got past work. Or at least have helped a bit,” snapped Mrs. Anderson.

But she instantly composed herself. There was death in the house. And Dr. Parsons was there, too, which was about the same thing as Zoe Maylock being there. It was all nonsense having a doctor for old Aunt Ursula anyhow. No doctor could do her any good.

But then how people would have talked!

Yes, death was in the house ... a welcome guest to all and to none more welcome than to Ursula Anderson. She had longed for him for many years

and now she knew he was near. Never was a bridegroom more welcome. She knew no living soul would regret her but that did not matter either.

The bare, dingy room, that had always been thought good enough for old Aunt Ursula, was full of shadows from the winking candle on the little stand by the bed. Aunt Ursula would never have anything but a candle. Lamps were dangerous and electric light something she could not or would not understand. The John Andersons had fixed the room up a little when they had to call in a doctor but it was very shabby still. A vaseful of faded artificial flowers on the bureau cast strange, exotic shadows of enormous blossoms and sprays on the stained, unpapered plaster above the bed. Emmy had been thankful that at last something had induced her mother to remove them from the niche in the wall on the stairway. She had always been so ashamed of them ... especially when Zoe Maylock came to the house. She had heard Zoe make fun of people who cherished artificial flowers.

The old dog lay on the worn rug beside the bed, his nose on his paws, his unwinking eyes fixed on the dying woman. He had lain there so for days.

Maggie McLean, who was supposed to be waiting on old Ursula, was asleep in her chair, just as Kathie Anderson had known it was likely she would be. Maggie owed a small debt to John Anderson or they would not have been able to get her. She knew that otherwise she would never be paid. How the Andersons had come down in the world! Maggie was old enough to remember them in the days of their prosperity. She even remembered the queer scandal at the time of old David Anderson's funeral. Few people had believed it. They said Clarissa Wilcox was quite out of her head and the Wilcoxes had always hated the Andersons and nobody but Susan Baker at Ingleside took any stock in it. And the Blythes had soon squelched *her*.

She might as well take a nap. Ursula Anderson was unconscious or nearly so and she couldn't do anything for her. But of course somebody must watch by the dying. In a way she felt sorry for old Ursula Anderson. She had had such a dull, drab life of it.

The wind moaned eerily in the old spruce by the window ... moaned and wailed and sometimes suddenly snarled and then died away to let the

occasional spits of rain be heard. Occasionally the window rattled as if something that was impatient and overdue was trying to gain an entrance.

Ursula Anderson lay movelessly on the bed. You might have thought she was already dead had it not been for her large, sunken grey eyes. They had been dull and bleared for many years, but they were bright and clear again, burning with a steady flame in her dry, parched face.

A grey flannel nightgown was buttoned about her ugly, wattled throat. A coarse sweep of grey hair lay over the pillow ... she had an amazing lot of hair for such an old woman. Her gaunt old body was quiet and flat under the faded patchwork quilt and thin blankets. Her knotted, discoloured hands lay over them movelessly.

She knew she was dying and that everybody was in a hurry for her to die and that there was not a living creature that would regret her death ... except perhaps the old dog.

She would have liked to have him lie on the bed beside her but Maggie McLean would not allow that. Sometimes she looked into his kind old eyes with a long steady look, such as they had often exchanged. She was glad she was dying and she was glad Maggie McLean was asleep. She was living over her whole life ... the life for which those in the parlour below were pitying her, as she very well knew. And she would not have exchanged lives with one of them. Now and then she laughed ... a little, low, soundless laugh. She would not have wakened Maggie McLean for worlds. Maggie would have fussed around, wanting to do something for her. And she did not want anything done, except to be left to die in peace.

But now and then she shuddered.

She knew she had become very ugly ... but she had not been ugly in youth, though no one had ever thought her pretty. She had just been one of "those Anderson girls," with no beauty except her long, thick, sloe-black hair. She had soft, large, grey eyes and creamy skin and lovely hands. Yes, she had had lovely hands ... he had often told her so ... the most beautiful hands he had ever seen ... and he had seen the hands of queens. Her sisters were counted pretty girls but they had fat, pudgy hands. She had never received a compliment about hers, except from him. It was faces and figures people looked at.

Her hands were very ugly now ... they had grown warped and roughened by constant sewing and by age. Yet even now they were better shaped than

Maggie McLean's. She had been rather small and thin in her youth and nobody had ever paid much attention to her amid her dashing, handsome sisters. She had never tried to attract attention and it was quite true she had never had a beau. It was equally true that she had never wanted one ... though nobody would have believed such a statement. None of the youths of Lowbridge or Glen St. Mary or Mowbray Narrows had attracted her in the least. They did not think or talk as she did ... or would have done if any of them had ever tried to talk to her.

She had spent her childhood and early youth under her mother's thumb and she was supposed to have no opinions of her own. Sometimes she thought they might have been surprised if they had known her thoughts ... surprised and shocked.

Then there had come a change. The old grey eyes darkened and quivered and glowed as she thought of it. Her Aunt Nan had written and asked for "one of the girls" to spend a year with her after her only daughter had gone to India as a missionary. Aunt Nan lived in a little fishing village and summer resort many miles down the coast and was a widow. Ursula had never seen her. But she was chosen to go because none of her sisters would consent to bury themselves alive in Half Moon Cove for a year.

But Ursula had been glad to go. She liked what she had heard about Half Moon Cove and she liked what her father had said about his sister Nan. Ursula gathered the impression that Aunt Nan was very different from all her other aunts ... that she was still and quiet like herself.

"Didn't talk a man to death," she had heard her father say once.

There was not a great deal to do at Aunt Nan's and Ursula had spent much of her time down at the shore among the dunes. The summer colony was much further down and few of them ever strayed so far. It was there she had met him, painting. He was the guest of a wealthy family who were summering at the next Cove but who never came near Half Moon. There were no amusements there.

He was a young Englishman ... an artist already on the way to the worldwide fame he afterwards achieved. It was said his older brother had a title ... which was likely the reason he had been asked to be the guest of the Lincolns. They were certainly not artistic.

But to Ursula he was just Larry ... and her lover. She loved his paintings but the brother with a title meant nothing to her.

“You are the most unworldly creature I’ve ever met in my life,” Larry had told her once. “The things that mean so much to most people seem to mean absolutely nothing to you. I don’t believe you belong to this world at all.”

Never had she known, or even dreamed, of anyone so utterly charming. They had loved each other from their first meeting. Ursula knew it could never have been any other way. She did not doubt he had loved and been loved by many women before her but she felt no jealousy of them. He was too wonderful to love any woman very long, especially an insignificant little thing like her. But, for the time being, he did love her. She knew that beyond a doubt. For that one enchanted summer he loved her and nothing could ever take that from her. And nobody in the world but herself knew it. She would never tell his name even to Aunt Nan. Poor old Maggie McLean pitied her ... but Maggie McLean had never been loved like that. Kathie Anderson pitied her ... but Kathie did not even know the meaning of love. She had married John to escape being an old maid and she thought nobody knew it while everybody knew it and laughed about it.

But nobody knew her, Ursula’s, secret. Of that she was sure.

She knew he could never marry her ... the idea never entered her head ... or, for that matter, his. Yet all his life he remembered little Ursula ... remembered her when beautiful and brilliant women caressed him. There was something about her he never found in any other woman. Sometimes he thought that was really why he never married.

Of course he couldn’t have married her. The very idea was absurd. And yet ... what great artist had married his cook? On his deathbed Sir Lawrence thought of Ursula and of no other woman, not even the Princess What’s-her-name, who would have taken him, they said, if he had ever asked her.

They had loved each other through lingering days and soft emerald evenings and nights of crystal splendour. She had not forgotten one of them. He had said mad, sweet things to her ... she had not forgotten one of them either ... those old words of love spoken so many years ago. Fancy anyone saying such things to Maggie McLean, snoring in her chair!

Her hair was grey and coarse now. But she remembered the day he pulled the pins out of it and buried his face in the sleek flow of it.

Then she remembered the moonrises they had watched together on that far shore, where the bones of old vessels were bleaching. He revelled in the windy nights ... but she had liked the calm nights better. She recalled the dim hills and the mysterious dunes ... the fishing boats sailing in ... and always his tender, passionate words. Maggie McLean would have felt insulted if anyone had spoken to her like that. Poor old Maggie, snoring away there, who had never lived. How Ursula pitied her!

She lifted her withered hands for a moment and then let them drop back on the quilt.

He must have painted her hands a hundred times. The hands of his pictures were famous. He had never been tired of exclaiming over the wonder of them ... “a kiss on the tip of every sweet finger,” he would whisper. Only old despised Ursula Anderson knew that people had gazed on those hands in scores of European art galleries. She had a collection of engravings of his pictures in a ragged old box which she carried everywhere with her. Nobody knew why. But then Ursula had always been queer. The only time she had ever come near to quarrelling with Kathie Anderson was one housecleaning time when Kathie had wanted to burn the box. It was full of nothing but faded, ragged old pictures, she said.

“What on earth do you see in them, Ursula?” she said. “If you are so fond of pictures there are some old chromos and mottoes you can have ...”

“Have they hands like those?” Ursula had asked quietly.

Kathie Anderson shrugged her shoulders and gave it up. After all, old people grew very childish. You had to indulge them. Hands, indeed. And most of the women were very ugly in spite of their titles.

Then the season had ended ... the cool September winds began to blow across the haunted dunes ... Larry had gone away, promising to write ... but he had never written. For a time life had wrung Ursula in its merciless hands. She had to tell Aunt Nan. There was no one else to whom she dared go. She could never go home to her self-righteous father and mother. Better to slip down to the dunes some night and end it all. She was very glad now she had not done so. It might have hurt Larry if he had ever heard of it. She would suffer anything rather than do that.

And Aunt Nan had been very good to her after the first shock was over. She was full of pity and did not blame Ursula too much.

“I should have looked after you better,” she mourned. “But then of course I thought an Anderson ... and now that scoundrel has led you astray.”

Ursula hid her anger for Larry’s sake. She knew Aunt Nan blamed an entirely different man. But a strange little flame came into her tired grey eyes.

“I wasn’t led astray,” she said. “I am not such a weakling. I knew what I was doing ... and I’m not sorry ... I’m not sorry.”

Aunt Nan could not understand. But she stood by Ursula staunchly. She kept Ursula with her on one excuse or another ... and had an old woman she could trust in for the birth ... since the Anderson name must be saved at all costs. Ursula nearly died ... even Aunt Nan thought it would be better if she had ... but Ursula was very glad that she managed to live.

The baby was a little girl with Ursula’s grey eyes and Larry’s golden hair. Aunt Nan had arranged for its adoption. The James Burnleys in Charlottetown were wealthy people who had long wanted to adopt a child. Aunt Nan had gone to school with Isabel Burnley. The Burnleys took the child gladly ... its mother was a young friend of hers, Aunt Nan told them, who had been unfortunate.

Ursula thought she could not bear it but for Larry’s sake she consented. And she wanted the child to have a good home. She went back to Lowbridge, a little quieter and more insignificant than before. The Andersons, who had been hoping she would pick up some kind of a husband when she was away, did not welcome her very effusively. They tried to patch up a marriage with her and an old widower of Glen St. Mary but to Ursula all men seemed common or unbearable after Larry.

But she had her own keen sweetness in life which no one knew or suspected. So she did not mind any longer when the men ignored her. A distant cousin, in need of an assistant, offered to teach her dressmaking and, to everyone’s surprise, Ursula developed an unsuspected talent for the art.

She went out sewing by the day and she often went to the Burnley home. Mrs. Burnley said there was nobody could fit a dress like Ursula Anderson. Ursula saw little Isabel often ... Mrs. Burnley had named the baby after herself. She saw her grow up through dimpled childhood and adorable girlhood.

At times she looked so like Larry that Ursula's heart gave a bound. She had little tricks of manner and voice like his. Ursula could never see anything of herself in her except her eyes. She was as beautiful and charming as Larry's daughter should be. The Burnleys adored her and showered everything on her. Ursula made most of her dresses. When she fitted them on her fingers sometimes touched the girl's flesh with rapture. It was almost like touching Larry himself.

Isabel liked her.

"I believe that queer, quiet little dressmaker really loves me," she used to say. "She never says so, of course ... but sometimes I've seen her looking at me in the queerest way ... almost as if I belonged to her, you know."

"The poor thing has so little in life," said Mrs. Burnley. "Her own people never made anything of her. Always be as kind to her as you can, Isabel."

There was one thing that Ursula could hardly bear ... to hear Isabel call Mrs. Burnley "mother." It seemed to tear her soul in pieces. At such times she hated Isabel Burnley ... and reproached herself bitterly for hating her when she was so good to Isabel. But she gave no sign. Mrs. Burnley never dreamed of it. She never thought of Ursula Anderson as feeling any particular emotion.

Finally Isabel married. The Burnleys were quite delighted over the match, much as they hated to lose Isabel. He was a handsome fellow, of good family and rich. Everybody thought Isabel was a lucky girl. Of course ... there were some stories ... but stories were always told about rich young men who enjoyed themselves. Mrs. Burnley said they had to sow their wild oats. Once married to Isabel Geoffrey Boyd would settle down and make a good husband. She hadn't a doubt of it. Her own husband had been wild enough in his youth. And what a husband he had made!

Ursula made most of the trousseau, even to the dainty underthings. Yet she was not happy or easy. She did not like Geoffrey Boyd. Of course Isabel was wildly in love with him ... and Ursula knew quite well that most young men were no saints ... even Larry could not be called a model. But it was not that. It was something about Geoffrey Boyd himself. Isabel was radiantly happy and Ursula tried to stifle her uneasiness and rejoice in that happiness.

She was allowed to help dress Isabel for her marriage and Isabel was a little amused to see how old Miss Anderson's hands trembled. She was always "old Miss Anderson" to Isabel ... always had been, although she was barely forty. Isabel was very fond of her and made up her mind that she would give her all the work possible. Ready-made dresses were coming in and home dressmaking was not so plentiful as it had been.

So Ursula was much in Isabel's home during the next four years. They were years of torture for her. She had to watch the change in Isabel's love from passionate adoration to fear and horror and ... worst of all ... hatred.

Geoffrey Boyd was tired of his wife within a year and he never made any pretence of hiding it. He was blatantly unfaithful to her, as everybody knew ... and he was hellishly cruel. Sometimes it seemed that his only pleasure was in inflicting pain on her. And he always laughed so horribly when saying and doing cruel things ... though he always took good care that nobody except that little half-witted Anderson creature heard him. The Burnleys knew that the marriage had been a failure but they would not admit it. Such things in those years were best covered up. And riches made up for a great many things.

Ursula hated him so bitterly that it seemed to her that her hate walked beside her, a tangible thing. In spite of her insignificance he must have felt her hatred, for he never passed her without some bland, suave sneer.

She was always being "pumped" about the Boyd menage but never a word could be got out of her. That was probably the reason Geoffrey Boyd allowed Isabel to have her in the house. He was not afraid of what she might tell. The Anderson gang were notorious gossips and although this Ursula creature was no more than half there, still, there were things she could say if she wanted to. And the Burnleys were still rich ... or supposed to be. Geoffrey Boyd had his own reasons for keeping on good terms with them. He was always so nice to Isabel in their presence that they did not believe half the stories they heard.

The marriage was six years old when it became known that the Burnleys had lost most of their money. Then Isabel knew that her husband meant to divorce her on some trumped-up charge, naming as co-respondent a certain man about town.

Divorce in those days, in the Maritimes, was a naked tragedy. And everybody knew she was an adopted child.

“Blood will tell,” they would say significantly. Everybody would believe the charges against her ... except old Ursula Anderson. Somehow, Isabel felt that *she* would never believe a word against her.

Geoffrey told Isabel that if she contested the suit he would take her son away from her. Ursula knew he meant to take the child anyway, just to torture Isabel, although he had no affection for the boy. He had never pretended to have. Little Patrick was a delicate child and Geoffrey Boyd had no use for sickly brats. Once he asked Isabel if Patrick inherited his constitution from her father or her mother. He knew that Isabel always had felt some secret shame that she was only an adopted child and it delighted him to flick it on the raw. He had once told her, in their courtship days, that it made her dearer to him.

“Suppose,” thought Ursula, “I told him her father was the great artist, Sir Lawrence Ainsley.”

But she knew she would only be laughed at. *Her* character, at least, was without reproach. Nobody, not even her own kith and kin, would put any faith in such a tale. Nor would it make any difference to Geoffrey. Even if he believed it.

“Fancy the sly old thing,” she could hear him saying. And the Burnleys would be furious. Aunt Nan was dead and she had no evidence whatever to prove that she had been a great artist’s light-o-love. But she made up her mind that there would be no divorce for all that. Some way she would prevent it ... she made up her mind firmly on that.

She was sewing in one of the upstairs rooms of the house the day Geoffrey Boyd came home drunk and whipped Patrick mercilessly in the library, while Isabel crouched on the floor outside the door and moaned in her helpless anguish. The last time Geoffrey had come home drunk he had hung his fox terrier up in the stable and whipped it to death. Would he kill Patrick, too?

When he came out and the sobbing boy ran to his mother he said to her, “When I have Patrick all to myself ... as I shall have sooner or later, my darling ... he shall have a good dose of the whip every day. You have made a baby of him with your coddling. *I* shall make a man of him. Was your father a minister, do you think?”

Ursula had sewed quietly and steadily through it all. Not a stitch was misplaced. Even Isabel thought her very unfeeling. But when Geoffrey

came reeling up the stairs she was standing at the head, waiting for him. Isabel had taken Patrick to his room. There was nobody about. Her eyes were blazing and her gaunt little form in its plain black gown was quivering.

“Get out of my way, damn you,” snarled Geoffrey. “You have always backed her up.”

“I am her mother,” said Ursula, “and her father was Sir Lawrence Ainsley.”

Geoffrey laughed drunkenly.

“Why not the King of England and be done with it?” he said. “*You* the mother of anybody!”

He added something too foul to repeat.

Ursula put out both hands, still beautiful in spite of every-thing ... the hands Larry had kissed and painted ... the hands that had been so much admired in his portrait of an Italian princess.

Geoffrey had shown an engraving of it to Isabel.

“If you had hands like that you might hold a man,” he had jeered.

Ursula gave the unsteady Geoffrey a hard push. She did it quite deliberately ... knowing what she meant to do ... knowing the probable consequences. She did not care in the least if they hanged her for it. Nothing mattered except saving Isabel and Patrick.

Geoffrey Boyd went backwards down the long staircase and fell on the marble floor at its foot. Ursula looked down at him for a few moments, with a feeling of triumph such as she had never experienced since the day Larry had first told her he loved her.

Geoffrey Boyd was lying in a rather dreadful limp heap beneath her. Somehow, she felt quite sure his neck was broken. There was no noise or disturbance anywhere. After a few moments she went back to the sewing room quietly, began another piece of work and went calmly on with her sewing. Isabel was safe.

There was no trouble, as it happened. The maid found Geoffrey and screamed. The usual formalities were gone through. Ursula, examined, said she had heard nothing. Neither had anybody else, apparently. It was known Geoffrey Boyd had come home drunk ... *that* was almost a daily occurrence, it appeared. Almost the only bit of scandal that came out at a very dull inquest. It was supposed he had missed his footing on the stairs

and fallen. People said they had often wondered it hadn't happened long ago. Good riddance to bad rubbish. Only they rather regretted there would be no divorce trial after all. A good many spicy things might have come out of that. They guessed the Burnleys would be relieved. Though it would have served them right for adopting a child of whom they knew nothing ... or pretended to know nothing. Though she *did* look amazingly like James Burnley's mother!

As for Ursula Anderson nobody talked of her at all, except to say she would miss the Boyd sewing.

The worst of Isabel's troubles were over. But it was found she was left quite poor. Both the Burnleys died within a week of each other ... oh, no, no question of suicide or anything dreadful like that. She took pneumonia and he had had some long-standing trouble for years, it seemed ... and they left nothing but debts. Well, that was so often the case with those high-flyers.

Isabel and Patrick lived in a tiny cottage in Charlottetown. Some come down for Isabel Burnley, eh? Geoffrey Boyd had squandered his fortune almost to the last penny. But she was happier than she had been for years in spite of the lean times she and Patrick experienced.

Ursula sent Isabel some money every month. Isabel never knew where it came from but she thought an old aunt of Geoffrey's, who had always seemed to like her, must be sending it. She never saw old Ursula Anderson now ... at least, not to notice her. But Ursula saw her very often.

When Ursula was fifty and Isabel thirty Isabel married a rich man and went to the States to live. Ursula followed her career in the papers and made exquisite dresses for her children ... Larry's grandchildren, whom he did not know existed. Isabel always wrote and thanked her sweetly. She was really rather attached to the poor old thing. She wanted to pay her, too, but Ursula would not take a cent.

Ursula did not get much sewing to do after Isabel went away. She had done so much for her that she had lost most of her clientele. But she managed to make a living till she was seventy and then her nephew, John Anderson, took her in ... much, it was said, against the wishes of his family. Isabel was dead by that time ... and so was Sir Lawrence. Ursula read of their deaths in the paper. It did not affect her very much. It was all

so long ago and they seemed like strangers to her. They were not the Larry she had known nor the Isabel she had loved.

She knew Isabel's second marriage had been a happy one and that contented her. It was well to die before the shadows began to fall.

As for Sir Lawrence, his fame was international. One of the finest things he had done, so she had read somewhere, had been the mural decoration of a great memorial church. The beauty of the Virgin's hands in the murals was much commented on.

"Yes, life has been worth living," thought old Ursula, as Maggie McLean snored resoundingly and the old dog stirred uneasily as if he felt some Great Presence nigh. "I am not sorry for anything ... not even for killing Geoff Boyd. One should repent at the last, according to all accounts, but I don't. It was just a natural thing to kill him ... as one might kill a snake. How the wind blows! Larry always loved the wind ... I wonder if he hears it in his grave. And I suppose those fools in the parlour down there are pitying me. Fools! Fools! Life has been good. I have had my hours. Have they ever had one? Nobody ever loved Kathie as Larry loved me ... nobody ever loved her at all. And nobody loved poor John. Yes, they have despised me ... the whole Anderson clan have always despised me. But I have lived ... oh, I have lived ... and they have never lived ... at least none of my generation. I ... I ... I have been the one who has lived. I have sinned ... so the world would say ... I have been a murderess ... so the world would say ... but I have lived!"

She spoke the last words aloud with such force and emphasis that old Maggie McLean awakened and started up in alarm.

She was just in time to see poor old Ursula Anderson die. Her eyes lived on for a moment or two after the rest of her body died. They were triumphant and young. The old dog lifted his head and gave a melancholy howl.

"Thank heaven I was awake," thought Maggie. "The Andersons would never have forgiven me if I had been asleep. Shut up, you old brute! You give me the creeps. Somehow, she looks different from what she did in life. Well, we all have to die sooner or later. But I don't think there'll be much mourning for poor Ursula. There never was anything in her! Strange, too. Most of the Andersons had lots of pep, whatever else they didn't have."

Maggie went downstairs, arranging her features properly as she did so.

"She has gone," she said solemnly. "Died as easy as a child going to sleep."

Everyone tried not to look relieved. Kathie roused John with a nudge. Dr. Parsons got up briskly ... then tried not to look too brisk.

"Well, she had lived her life" ... "Such a life!" he added mentally. "If you like I'll stop in at the undertaker's on my way back and ask him to come out. I suppose you'll want things done as ... as ... simply as possible?"

He had just saved himself from saying "cheaply." What a break that would have been! Enough to ruin his career. But would Blythe or Parker ever have thought of offering to send the undertaker? Not they. It was the little things like that that counted. In ten years' time he would have most of their practices.

"Thank you," said Kathie gravely.

"That's mighty kind of you," said John. To his own surprise John was thinking he would miss Aunt Ursula. No one could put on a patch like she could. But then she had sewed all her life. She could do nothing else. Queer where all the money she made had gone to.

The doctor went out. The rain had ceased for good and the moon occasionally broke through the windy clouds. He had lost his evening with Zoe but there was tomorrow night ... if some fool woman didn't up and have a baby. He thought of Zoe in her ripe beauty ... and then he thought of old Ursula Anderson upstairs in her grey flannel nightdress. She was dead.

But then, had she ever been alive?

"Didn't I say she couldn't die till the tide went out?" said Uncle Alec triumphantly. "You young folks don't know everything."

The Fourth Evening

CANADIAN TWILIGHT

*A filmy western sky of smoky red
 Blossoming into stars above a sea
Of soft mysterious dim silver spread
 Beyond the long grey dunes' serenity,
Where the salt grasses and sea poppies press
Together in a wild sweet loneliness.*

*Seven slim poplars on the windy hill
 Talk some lost language of an elder day,
Taught by the green folk that inhabit still
 The daisied field and secret friendly way,
Forever keeping in their solitudes
The magic ritual of our northern woods.*

*The darkness woos us like a perfumed flower
 To reedy meadow pool and wise old trees,
To beds of spices in a garden bower
 And the spruce valley's dear austerities,
I know their lure of dusk but evermore
I turn to the enchantment of the shore.*

*The idle ships dream-like at anchor ride
 Beside the piers where wavelets lap and croon,
One ghostly sail slips outward with the tide
 That swells to meet the pale imperial moon.*

*Oh fading ship, between the dark and light
I send my heart and hope with you tonight.*

Walter Blythe

RILLA FORD:- “He speaks of the enchantment of the shore. Yet I think he really loved the woods better. How many twilights we spent together! And then the horror! But I always feel that his heart and hope are still with me, though that dreadful memory of the day the news of his death came at times overwhelms me. And now Gilbert has joined the air force and I have to wait again! ... How Walter writing poetry used to annoy poor Susan! When I think of Walter it almost seems wicked to have been glad that Ken came back. But what would I have done if he hadn't! I could never have been as brave as Una.”

OH, WE WILL WALK WITH SPRING TODAY

*Oh, we will walk with spring today,
With fair and laughing Lady May,
In all sweet carelessness among
The gods who ruled when earth was young:
On secret trails of spell and rune
Where wondrous things might happen soon,
Some hidden pixy whisper low
A wise Lost Word of Long Ago
Or naked foot of dryad press
Her path of haunted loveliness.*

*Oh, we will walk and hear and see
Enchantment, magic, mystery,
Some hilly field of sun and grass
Where tantalizing shadows pass,
Some lonely tree in cobweb bloom
Woven upon no earthly loom,
Some gay, unconquered brook that sings
Legends of old forgotten springs,
Some necromantic pines that teach
The lore of a diviner speech.*

*Oh, we will walk with spring today
Along a scented blossom way,
In friendly mossy hollows sip
A sacramental fellowship,
And tryst with winds that seem in truth
To blow from out the Land of Youth,
Oh, we will be as glad as song
And happy as our quest is long,
With hearts that laugh because in Spring*

One can believe in anything.

Walter Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “Yes, one *can* believe in anything in spring, thank God. I remember in the old days, Anne, I used to believe in spring that I could win you, in spite of everything.”

JEM BLYTHE:- “Great snakes, dad o’ mine, you don’t mean to tell me that there was ever any question about *that!*”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Ah, you young fry don’t know as much about your mother’s youth and mine as you think. I had a hard time to get her, I can tell you that.”

SUSAN:- “Even in spring it seems quite impossible to believe there could ever have been any question about *that*. If *I* was a girl and a man like Dr. Blythe as much as looked at me ...” *Shakes her head and thinks what a queer world it is.*

DR. BLYTHE:- “Why, there were years Anne wouldn’t even speak to me.”

ANNE:- “The line should be ‘in youth one can believe in anything.’”
(*sighs.*)

DR. BLYTHE:- “I agree with you. But ... we lost our son, Anne, as did many others, but we have our memories of him and souls cannot die. We can still walk with Walter in the spring.”

GRIEF

*To my door came grief one day
In the dawnlight ashen grey,
All unwelcome entered in,
Took the seat where Joy had been
At my hearthstone when the glow
Of my fire had faded low,
In Love's own accustomed place
Grief sat with me face to face.*

*In the noonday's ministry
Grief was ever near to me,
In the mournful eventide
Grief was closely at my side,
Shrinking from her sullen woe
Much I longed to see her go.*

*Music lost its tender grace
When I looked on her grim face,
Flowers no more were sweet to me,
Sunshine lost its witchery,
Laughter hid itself in fear
Of that Presence dour and drear,
Little dreams in pale dismay
Made all haste to steal away.*

*Reft of what had made me glad,
Grief alone was all I had,
Then I took her to my breast,
Cherished her as welcome guest,
Fairer every day she grew,
More beloved, kind and true ...*

*Thus it was that Grief to me
Friend and comrade came to be.*

*Broke at last a bitter day
When my dear Grief went away;
On a silver-dappled dawn
I awoke and found her gone;
Oh, the emptiness and smart
That she left within my heart!
Vain my lonely, ceaseless plea,
“Faithless Grief, come back to me!”*

Anne Blythe

ANNE, *sighing*:- “I wrote that years ago, as an echo of Matthew’s death. Since then I have learned that some griefs are more faithful.”

UNA MEREDITH:- “Ah, indeed yes.”

SUSAN BAKER, *coming in from the garden*:- “I wonder what they are all so sober about. I suppose they are thinking of Walter’s death. I’ve always suspected that Una was in love with him. Well, I am going to make some muffins for supper ... that ought to cheer them up.”

THE ROOM

*This is a haunted room,
This quiet firelit place,
Where glimmering mirrors bloom
With many a misty face.*

*Here a young lover still
Dreams his wild heart away
In splendid anguish till
The cruel gleam of day.*

*The little Spanish bride,
Lonely beyond belief,
Homesick until she died,
Comes in her alien grief.*

*A miser counts his gold
With furtive anxious breath,
A prisoner as of old,
Not even freed by death.*

*And she who hated so
Hates still, a fugitive
Unhappy guest of woe,
Who cannot yet forgive.*

*There are no happy ghosts ...
The happy dead lie still;
Only they come, the hosts,
Who did or suffered ill.*

*Old scandals lurk and creep,
Old lies and mockeries,*

*Secrets that poisoned sleep,
And ancient cruelties.*

*Oh, who would think this room,
This pleasant firelit place,
Where rosy shadows bloom
Was such a haunted place?*

Anne Blythe

SUSAN:- “I remember hearing that story of the Spanish bride when I was a girl. A sea captain brought her home and she died of homesickness. People said she ‘walked.’ Do you think it possible, doctor?”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Do *you* believe in ghosts, Susan?”

SUSAN:- “No, indeed ... but ... but ...”

JEM BLYTHE:- “But you’re afraid of them all the same.”

SUSAN, *indignantly*:- “I am *not*!”

ANNE:- “It’s odd that every other person you meet has seen one.”

JEM:- “Or imagined they did. Who was the old miser, mums?”

SUSAN:- “I’ll bet it was old Sam Flagg on the Lowbridge Road. Wasn’t it, Mrs. Dr. dear? He’d skin a flea for its hide and tallow.”

ANNE:- “I never heard of him. Except for the Spanish bride, everything else was imaginary. *Do* get that into your heads.”

FAITH BLYTHE:- “We *do* understand. And your poem is true of almost every room on earth that has been much lived in ...”

The Road to Yesterday

Susette was not actually engaged to Harvey Brooks but she knew that when she came back from her visit to Glenellyn she would be. When Harvey had gone as far as to invite her to Glenellyn to meet his mother and Aunt Clara and his Great-aunt Ruth and several other relatives it meant only one thing, that he had at last made up his mind to marry her. It would not have occurred to Harvey that there was any other mind to be made up.

And indeed, there wasn't. Susette had long since decided to say "yes" when he said "will you?" What else could a little known sub-editor of a small provincial paper really do when Harvey Brooks condescended to her? To accept Harvey meant accepting wealth, social position, a beautiful home ... and ... and ... and Harvey. Susette made an impatient grimace as she pulled her smart green hat over the golden bronze of her hair. "You are the most unreasonable creature I know," she said. "Harvey is a catch, not only for what he has but for what he *is*. He's ... he's impeccable. Handsome, well-groomed, well-behaved, successful. What more do you ask, Susette King? You, who ran around a farm at Glen St. Mary bare-footed till you were twelve and now, at twenty-eight, are trying to delude yourself and the world into the belief that you have a career? You ought simply to be dying of joy to think that Harvey Brooks ... *the* Harvey Brooks who was always supposed to be too busy making money out of black foxes ever to find time to make love but who would have been expected to choose a countess if he did ... has taken it into his head to fall in love with you, to the horror of his clan."

Still, she liked Harvey very well. She loved what he could offer her, and she was going to marry him. There was no doubt in her mind about that as

she ran down to Glenellyn that afternoon in her own little car. Nevertheless, she was a trifle nervous. It was a bit of an ordeal to be appraised by Harvey's family, who thought so very highly of themselves. And the minute she saw Glenellyn she hated it.

Mrs. Brooks condescended and Aunt Clara kissed her. Susette had not expected that. It seemed to include her too quickly ... and too inescapably ... in the family. The rest of the house party ... almost all of them relations of Harvey ... shook hands dutifully and almost pleasantly. On the whole, in spite of Aunt Clara's kiss, she felt that they did not quite approve of her.

Aunt Clara, who had a reputation for saying the most poisonous things in the sweetest way, asked her if she wasn't tired after her hard day in a stuffy office.

"Let me see ... it's the *Enterprise* you work on? It's supposed to be Conservative, isn't it?"

"No ... Independent," said Susette, her green eyes shimmering wickedly.

Mrs. Brooks would have sighed, if she had ever done anything so human. She did not trust green-eyed women. Mrs. Gilbert Blythe had green eyes and she had never liked her.

"Harvey," Susette said at lunch next day. "I'm going to play truant this afternoon. I'm going to take my car and go off for a real spin on the road to yesterday. In other words, to see an old farm at Glen St. Mary where I used to spend my summers when I was a kiddy."

"I'll go with you," said Harvey.

"No." Susette shook her head. "I want to go alone. To keep a tryst with old memories. It would bore you."

Harvey frowned a bit. He did not understand this whim of Susette's and when he did not understand a thing he condemned it. Why should Susette want to run away from his house party on some mad, mysterious excursion of her own to Glen St. Mary? But there was a mutinous tilt to Susette's beautiful chin that warned him it was of no use to protest.

She drew a long breath as she spun out of the Glenellyn gates. There was a delightful road ahead of her. Not a straight road. A straight road was an abomination to Susette, who loved curves and dips.

She wondered what had become of all the half and third cousins who had had such fun at the farm with her. And the Blythes and Merediths who were there half their time. She had lost track of them all ... forgotten all of

them except Letty, who had been her special pal, and Jack Bell, who was so straight and stiff and was nicknamed Ding-dong ... and Dick. She could never forget Dick, the bully and braggart and tell-tale. She had hated him. Everybody had hated him. She remembered how he used to fight with young Jem Blythe, who took after Jem, Sr., in his liking for a good rousing fight in a good cause.

“What a little pig he was!” remembered Susette. “If he had been ugly one could have forgiven him. But he was a good-looking kid. He had fine eyes ... big grey devilish eyes. I wonder what has become of him. He’ll be married, of course. He’d have to have a wife to bully as soon as he could. Oh, I’d love to meet Dick again and slap his face ... as Di Meredith once did.”

Big clouds had come up when Susette finally turned in at the well-remembered gate of the farm at Glen St. Mary. Her heart bounded to see the same wooden gateposts. The old house was there still, unchanged ... the old lawn, the old garden, the gleam of the pond through the dark old spruces. Everything was trim and shipshape so it was evident that Roddy or somebody still lived there. But it was equally evident that the place was temporarily deserted. A thunder-storm was certainly coming up and if she couldn’t get into the house it behooved her to scuttle back to Glenellyn.

She was on the point of turning sorrowfully away, when a young man came around the corner of the house and stopped to look at her. He was in flying kit and it was fourteen years since she had seen him.

“Why, Dick—Dick,” she said.

She ran to him with outstretched hands. She was glad to see even Dick. Hateful as he had always been, he was still a part of the old life that had suddenly become so near and real again.

Dick took her hands and pulled her a little nearer. He looked earnestly into her green eyes and Susette felt a queer inexplicable thrill such as no look of Harvey’s had ever given her.

“This must be Susette—Susette King,” said Dick slowly. “Nobody else could have those eyes. They always made me think of Mrs. Dr. Blythe’s.”

“Yes, it’s Susette. I’m staying at Glenellyn ... the Brooks’ summer place, you know.”

“Yes, I know. Everybody knows Glenellyn.” He seemed to have forgotten to let go of her hands.

“And when I found it was so near, I just had to come. I think I expected to find the old gang and perhaps some of the Blythes. But nobody seems to be at home. Who lives here now? Where did you drop from, Dick?”

Susette was rattling on because she didn't know just what had happened to her and she was afraid to find out. But she remembered that she had hated Dick ... they had all hated Dick ... and pulled away her hands.

“Roddy and his wife live here. I've been staying with them for a few days ... before going back to my station. I'm in the bomber ferry service, you see, and I'm leaving tomorrow. I very nearly left this morning. Thank any gods there be that I didn't.”

Something darted into Susette's memory. This Dick had once kissed her against her will and she had slapped his face for it. She didn't know why her face should burn over the recollection. Or why it should all at once have ceased to be an enraging humiliation. When Jem Blythe had wanted to make her mad he used to tease her about it.

“I ought to thank them too,” she laughed, “because since you're staying here you can probably let me into the house if it starts to rain. I *do* want to see all round the place now that I'm here, but I wouldn't have dared to stay for fear of a downpour.”

“You always had a nice laugh, Susette,” said Dick. “There's nothing like it in the whole gang ... except perhaps Di Meredith's. And your eyes ... what colour are they really? I never could decide ... of course it's hard to photograph grey-green starlight. I used to think they were a little like Mrs. Dr. Gilbert Blythe's.”

“Whom you hated,” thought Susette. “You didn't make such pretty speeches in the old days.” All at once ... everything seemed to be happening all at once this amazing afternoon ... it seemed to her vastly important that Dick should know she had always hated him ... always would hate him. “Do you remember how we fought? How I detested you? How we all detested you?”

“We certainly didn't hit it off when we were kids,” admitted Dick. “But ... be fair now, Susette, was I altogether to blame?”

“You were,” cried Susette passionately ... much more passionately than there seemed any need for. “You were always doing the meanest things. Do you remember how you pushed me into that bed of nettles and ruined my pink chiffon dress ... and called attention to my freckles before everybody

... and burned my doll at the stake ... and filled poor Bruno's coat with burrs and ... and ..."

"Kissed you," said Dick with an impish grin.

"And do you remember what a whack on the nose I gave you for it?" cried Susette with relish. "How you bled!"

"Of course I was a little beast in those days ... but it is all so long ago. Just forget for this afternoon that you hate me ... though I'd rather you'd hate me than think nothing about me if it comes to that. Let's have a prowl around all the old spots. If you don't like me you needn't pretend to."

"I really ought to go back, you know," sighed Susette. "It's going to rain and Harvey will be peeved."

"Who is Harvey?"

"The man I'm going to marry," said Susette, wondering why she felt so keen to let Dick know that.

Dick took it in slowly. Then ...

"Oh, of course ... the big fox man. But you're not wearing any ring ... I looked to see first thing."

"It ... it isn't absolutely settled yet," stammered Susette. "But it will be tonight. He's going to propose tonight. That's really why I ran away today. I think ..."

"Of course I've heard of the great fox man. Everybody has," said Dick slowly. "Well, he has a good start on me but a fast worker can do wonders in an afternoon, as Jem Blythe used to say."

"Don't talk nonsense," said Susette curtly. "Let's prowl. I want to see all I can before it does rain. I'm glad the farm hasn't changed much. Even the old white-washed stones round the flowerbeds are the same."

"Susette, you are beyond any question the most exquisite creature I have ever seen," said Dick.

"Do you say that to every girl half an hour after you've met her? Remember I've long since crossed the old maid line."

"If I'd ever happened to think it I would ... but I never happened to before. I decided recently that I'd always say what I really thought the moment I thought it. Mrs. Ken Ford once said she always did. You've no idea what pep it gives to life. And things go stale if you keep them unsaid."

"I daresay." Susette wondered what would happen if she said everything she thought ... just when she thought it ... to Harvey. And she wondered why she only half-liked Dick's frequent reference to the Blythes and Merediths. He had hated them in the old days.

"Besides, it isn't half an hour since I met you ... it's years. We're second cousins, aren't we? And old fr ... enemies. So why shouldn't I say that you're exquisite and beautiful and wholly charming, with hair like the sunset light on old firs and eyes like that pond down there at dawn and a skin like a tea-rose petal?"

"Do you remember the time when you pointed out all my defects to the assembled gang?" demanded Susette. "You said my hair was like a stack of dried hay and that I had eyes like a cat and a million freckles. Jem Blythe knocked you down for it," she added, with a feeling of gratitude to Jem Blythe.

"My aunt, there you go again," groaned Dick. "Why can't you let the dead past bury its dead?"

"Why, indeed?" Susette wondered herself. Why did she feel that she *must* drag up these things ... remember how hateful Dick had been ... must not let herself forget it for a single moment? Because he couldn't have changed really. People didn't. He had just learned to cover up his meanness with a certain debonair charm made possible by his indisputable good looks. Suddenly Susette felt oddly panic-stricken. She must start for Glenellyn instantly before ... well, before it rained.

"You can't," said Dick. "There's the first growl. You will be sensible and come into the house until the storm is over. Then we'll finish our prowl. There's the big stone Anne Blythe fell on off the apple tree. Do you remember how terrified we were that she was killed?"

Couldn't he remember anything but those hateful Blythe girls? She would simply ignore his references.

"It is five now," she protested. "If I don't start at once I shall be late for dinner."

"I can get you a bite. Anne Blythe taught me how to cook ..."

"I don't believe it! Anne always hated you," cried Susette, stung out of the resolution.

Dick grinned.

“Anne and I were a good deal better friends than you knew, though we did fight in public. Anyway it’s out of the question to think of starting to Glenellyn with a storm coming on. You were always a fearless little demon, so I’ve heard, but that is a thing I’m simply not going to let you do. You know what our Island roads are like in a rain.”

Susette yielded. She knew she couldn’t negotiate that winding road in a rainstorm ... it would be hard enough after it was over. Besides, she wanted to scare Harvey just once as a sort of dying protest. Moreover, she felt that she had not yet made Dick realize that she hated him as much as ever. And she was not going to leave the farm until that job was completed.

They went into the house. It was changed ... new furniture ... new curtains ... new rugs ... new paint. But the old rooms were unchanged. Susette ran all through them while Dick did something in the kitchen. When she came back to the living room ... it had been the parlour in her childhood ... the rain was flooding against the windows and the thunder was crashing overhead. Ordinarily Susette revelled in thunderstorms. She wondered if Harvey would worry. She did not think Aunt Clara would.

Dick came in from the kitchen carrying a tray whereon was a pot of tea, a plate of toast, and a jar of jam. He went to the corner cupboard and took out dishes ... Aunt Marian’s old fluted set with the rosebud on the side and her little brown jug with its creamy lining.

“You remember Di Meredith gave her this in place of one she broke?”

What a memory he had for everything connected with that Blythe clan! But Susette put them resolutely out of her mind.

“Oh,” she sighed, “this toast is heavenly.”

“I had a good teacher, don’t forget,” grinned Dick. “Pull up to the table and let us break bread together. Don’t forget to compliment me on my tea. I’m an expert at making tea.”

“I suppose Anne Blythe taught you,” Susette could not help saying.

“She gave me some hints. But I had a natural gift for it.”

“Boastful as ever.” But she sat down at the table obediently. The tea *was* good; so was the toast; it seemed hard to think of Dick making toast. As for the jam it had evidently been made from old Susan Baker’s famous recipe. It had been known all over the Glen St. Mary neighbourhood.

“A jug of tea, a crust of bread and *thou*,” said Dick impudently. Susette refused ... temporarily ... to resent it. But why, oh why, should it be so

delightful to sit in this half dark room drinking tea and munching toast with detested Dick?

"I ought to telephone Glenellyn," she said weakly.

"You can't. This line never works in thunderstorms. If I were Harvey Brooks I'd be scouring the countryside for you. Susette, did any poor devil ever tell you that the way you looked over your shoulder at him drove him entirely mad? It eclipses even Rilla Ford's famous smile."

"Do you remember," said Susette slowly, "how, when we were going to play Robinson Crusoe, you wouldn't let me be Man Friday because I was a girl?"

"And quite right I was! How could Crusoe have a distracting Man Friday like you? I showed my sense. I remember the Blythes agreed with me."

"If he mentions a Blythe again I'll throw that pitcher at his head," thought Susette.

Much later ... it might have been hours ... months ... years ... Susette awoke to the fact that although the thunder and lightening had ceased the rain was still pouring down in a business-like way as if it meant to keep on for days. She looked at her watch and exclaimed in dismay.

"Half past six! It will be dinner time in an hour at Glenellyn. I can never get there!"

"I should think you couldn't," said Dick. "Have some sense, Susette. The road from here will be absolutely impassable for that little car of yours. You can't go back tonight. You've just got to stay here."

"Nonsense! I can't stay here. I must telephone ... Harvey will come for me somehow ..."

"Just try to phone ..."

Susette tried. There was no reply. She stood for a few moments before the telephone wondering why she didn't mind.

"I ... I don't know what to do," she said miserably. "Oh, I know it would be madness to try to get back in this storm ... but I have to be at the office tomorrow morning and ... and ..."

"And how about Harvey's proposal in the meantime?" grinned Dick. "Never mind, Susette. There are other proposals. I'm going to make one myself in the morning. I'll be awkward ... I've never had any experience ... but I'll get the thing said. I was on the brink of proposing to Di Meredith

once but somehow never managed to be sure I wanted to. Now I know why.”

Susette sat down in fury because there didn't seem anything else to do. Dick lit the candles on the mantelpiece ... informing her that Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert Blythe had given them to Roddy and his wife for a wedding present ... and crossed one long leg over the other. He didn't pay Susette any more compliments or rag her about Harvey or drag in the Blythes or Merediths by the skin of their teeth. He talked all the evening about aviation and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Susette listened greedily. She almost forgot, until she found herself between the lavender-scented sheets of Mrs. Roddy's guest room bed in the upstairs, south-east corner of the farmhouse, that she hated Dick.

“Think,” she told herself desperately, “how he used to bully the other boys ... how he once twisted Jack's arm to make him apologize ... how he told Aunt Marian it was Jack who took the pie ... what he did to the kitten” ... *That* memory was intolerable. Susette buried her face in the pillow and groaned. She was glad to recall what Jem Blythe had done to him for it. Still, the memory was intolerable. She hated him ... she did hate him ... she would get up ever so early in the morning and sneak away before she saw him again.

Suddenly Susette sat up in bed and shook her small white hand at the darkness. She had just remembered what had happened to her sensations when her fingers had happened to touch Dick's as he gave her the second cup of tea.

“I won't fall in love with him! I won't! I won't!”

She was aghast. When she put her danger into words it terrified her. There was nothing for it but an early morning flit back to safety and sanity and ... and Harvey.

When Susette awoke she knew something she had not known when she went to sleep. She had only been afraid of knowing it. She got out of bed very softly and tiptoed to the window. The sun was not yet visible but the whole morning sky behind the eastern hill of spruces was rose-hued, with gossamer clouds of pale gold strewn over it. Little shivers were running over the silver-green pond. The distances were hung with pale blue mists. Susette knew she must drive instantly away through those lovely morning mists or she was a lost woman.

Swiftly and noiselessly she dressed. Swiftly and noiselessly she crept down the stairs, opened the front door and stepped out. She looked about her and caught her breath with delight. The sun was up now and a new lovely world, with its face washed, was blinking its innocent baby eyes at it. She had forgotten what the farm was like at dawn. And she hadn't seen all the dear spots she had loved. Wasn't there time at least for a sneak down to the pond? Dick wouldn't be up for an hour yet.

She would take a stolen run through this golden world. She would slip down to the pond on the old pathway with the wind as a gallant companion. The grasses would bathe her feet in green coolness and the water would sing to her ... just once before she went back to Harvey.

When she was almost at the pond a suspicious fragrance met her nostrils. Before she realized the truth she had broken through the trees and saw Dick squatted by a wood fire, broiling bacon, with a coffee pot beside him. A tablecloth was spread on the ground and ... *what* was on it? Wild strawberries! Wild strawberries on a green leaf! How long was it since she had eaten wild strawberries of any kind, much less the kind that grew on the farm? She recalled as in a dream that Jem Blythe had always claimed to know a secret place where they grew bigger and sweeter than anywhere else.

Dick waved a fork with a piece of bacon on it at her. "Good girl! I was just going to call you. We've got to start soon to be in town in time. Besides, I didn't want you to miss such a chance to bathe your soul in dawn as Anne Blythe used to say. Look what I have for you ... I found Jem Blythe's old plot in the back pasture. Such amazing luck! But then this farm has always been noted for its good luck. Besides ... see ... a bunch of the little red columbines you used to love. Pick out a soft spot on that rock and sit down."

Susette did as she was told. She felt a little dazed. Dick poured her coffee and fed her on bacon and wild strawberries. Neither of them said much. There were zones of beautiful colour on the pond, with little pools of pellucid shadow here and there. Great white cloud-mountains with amber valleys rose up in the sky over Glen St. Mary way. Presently, she supposed, Dick would be flying over them. The idea drove her to the banality of offering him a penny for his thoughts.

“I was wondering what would happen if I suddenly called you ‘darling,’” he said solemnly.

“I should go away, of course,” said Susette. “I’m going anyway. We can’t sit here forever.”

“Why not?” said Dick.

“That is a silly question and of course not meant to be answered,” said Susette, getting up.

Dick got up, too.

“I’m going to answer it. We can’t sit here forever, heavenly as it would be, because the next bunch of big boys leaves the day after tomorrow. There isn’t a great deal of time for us to get a special licence and be married.”

“You’re quite mad,” said Susette.

“Do you remember Walter Blythe’s favourite quotation? Funny how the Walters in that family seem to run to poetry. I’ve been told his uncle would have been famous if he hadn’t stayed in France in the last show. Anyway, it’s a poor family that can’t afford one madman. I was never much of a one for poetry but didn’t somebody once write something like this? I’m sure I’ve heard Walter quoting it.

*There is a pleasure sure in being mad
That none but madmen know.*

“I was never as intimate with the Blythes as you seem to have been,” said Susette coldly.

“That was a pity. They were a delightful family.”

“And I am going to the house to get my car and hurry back to Glenellyn,” said Susette firmly.

“I know that’s what you intend to do but it won’t take long to change your mind.”

Susette looked about her a bit helplessly. Then she happened to look at Dick. The next moment she was caught tightly in his arms and was being kissed ... one long, wild, rapturous, breathless kiss.

“Sweetheart ... joy ... delight ... wonder. Don’t look so furious, darling. Don’t you know that when you look at a man with eyes like that you are

simply asking him to kiss you? You are mine, Susette. I've made you mine with that kiss. You can never belong to anyone else."

Susette stood very still. She knew this was one of the rare splendid moments of life. She knew that she would never marry Harvey.

"We'll be on our way to Charlottetown in fifteen minutes," Dick was saying. "It'll take me that time to put away Mrs. Roddy's frying pan and lock your car into Roddy's barn."

Susette went back to her room for her watch, which she had left under her pillow. She supposed she was bewitched ... literally bewitched. Nothing else would account for it. She remembered that Dr. Gilbert Blythe had been rather laughed at because he had said there might be such a thing at the time of the goings-on at the old Field place. If she could only forget about the kitten! But so many boys were cruel at first.

When she got back to the pond she could not see Dick anywhere at first. Then she saw him standing a little way off in the shadow of some spruces. His back was towards her and a red squirrel was perched on his shoulder. He was feeding it with something and the squirrel was chattering to him.

Susette was very still. She knew another thing now. And she would have run if Dick had not wheeled round at that moment. The squirrel made a wild leap to the trees and Dick came striding to her.

"Did you see that little chap? And do you remember how Jem Blythe always loved squirrels? They've always been fond of me, too ... the folk of fur and feathers."

"*You are not Dick*," said Susette, in a low tone, looking up at him.

Dick stopped.

"No," he said, "I'm not. I was wondering how I was going to tell you. But how did you find out?"

"When I saw the squirrel on your shoulder. Animals always hated Dick ... he was so cruel to them. People don't change as much as that. No squirrel would ever have climbed his shoulder ... that was why the Blythes hated him so much. And may I ask who you really are?"

"Having promised to marry me you have a right to the information," he said gravely. "I am Jerry Thornton, a second cousin of Dick's through Aunt Marian, but no earthly relation to you. We lived in Charlottetown but I was here one or two summers when you weren't. I heard all about you from the others ... especially Jem, with whom I was great pals and who had a

youthful passion for you at the time. And remember you called me Dick first. I was afraid, if I undeceived you, you wouldn't stay long enough to let me make you love me. I thought I'd a better chance as Dick ... even though you had such a grudge against him. We always looked alike ... our grandmothers were sisters ... but honest to goodness we aren't alike under our skins. Besides, Dick is married ... as are most of the old gang."

"He would be," said Susette.

Jerry looked down at her a bit anxiously. "A little thing like a mistake in the man isn't going to make any difference, is it, Susette?"

"I don't see why it should," answered Susette. "But tell me two things. First, how did you know that Dick once kissed me?"

"As if any boy wouldn't kiss you if he ever got the chance!" scoffed Jerry.

"And how did you know I loved wild columbines?"

"Everybody loves wild columbines," said Jerry.

Au Revoir

I Want

*I'm weary of the city's noise ...
I want to steal away
To fields where moonlight loves to dream
By brooks of yesterday.
And where through many a waving pine
The lights of an old house will shine.*

*I want to feel a wind that blows
From hilltops far and free
O'er dewy clover fields that run
Down to the merry sea,
And hear again the muted roar
Of breakers on a rocky shore.*

*I'm tired of racket and of glare,
I want a sweet dim night
In an old tangled garden where
Bloom lilies cool and white ...
The scented darkness there will be
A tried and trusted friend to me.*

*I want the joyous rain to talk
The way it talks in spring,
And tell me as it used to do
Some sweet forgotten thing,*

*I want the cherry blossom snow
On orchard paths I used to know.*

*I want a little time to dream
 Away from haste and rush,
I want to barter honk and scream
 For call of twilight thrush,
I want a little time to play ...
I'll take the train back home today!*

Walter Blythe

SUSAN:- “There are parts of that I can understand. But it must be mostly what Mrs. Dr. dear calls imagination. Walter was never long in any city when he wrote that poem ... I remember he was just in his early teens. You couldn't call Lowbridge a city. Shall I ever forget the night he ran away from Dr. Parker's and came home six miles in the dark? [*](#) And I am sure our garden was never tangled here or at the House of Dreams. The cherry blossoms seem whiter than usual this year. How he loved them, especially the ones that grew wild in Rainbow Valley. But he loved every pretty thing. ‘Susan,’ he would say to me, ‘the world is so full of beauty.’ He wasn't old enough to know better. But there are some pretty things in it and tomorrow I must weed the pansy bed. We always did it together. ‘Look at the quaint faces of them, Susan,’ he would say. I'm not sure just what ‘quaint’ meant but the pansies have faces and that I will tie to.”

[*](#)See *Anne of Ingleside*

THE PILGRIM

*The wind is on the hill,
Black rain clouds in the west,
But I must hie me still
Upon my ancient quest.*

*For old enchantments weave
The spell of stormy skies,
And clouds will lift and leave
A star of glad surprise.*

*Or it may be a moon
As slender as a ring,
Will hang where birches croon
Above a haunted spring.*

*It may be I shall tread
Some fair uncharted way,
Where I shall meet my dead
Dear dreams of yesterday.*

*The white spring shall be mine
And mine the summer's good,
The tang of autumn wine,
The winter's solitude.*

*Here, boughs shall hold me in
With green possessive grace,
There, where the dunes begin,
Wave spray shall whip my face.*

*I'll wander far and wide
With neither haste nor rest,*

*All beauty for my guiding star
And my eternal quest.*

Walter Blythe

DIANA:- “He wrote that just before the beginning of the last war.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “A child talking of his dreams of yesterday!”

ANNE:- “That is the only time we can talk of them. It is too bitter
when we get old.”

SUSAN, *indignantly*:-“You and the doctor will never get old, Mrs. Dr.
dear.”

ANNE, *sighing*:-“I feel old enough sometimes—even older than I
am.”

FAITH BLYTHE:- “Beauty was Walter’s guiding star ... and we know he
found it forever, Mother Blythe.”

SPRING SONG

*O gypsy winds that pipe and sing
In budding boughs of beech,
I know I hear the laugh of spring
In all your silver speech.*

*O little mists that hide and curl
In hollows wild and green,
I know you come in gauze and pearl
To wait upon your queen.*

*O little seed in mellow earth
Where rain and sunshine kiss,
I know the quivering joy of birth
Throbs in your chrysalis.*

*O Hope, you blossom on my way
Like violet from the clod,
And Love makes rosy all the way
When spring comes back from God.*

Walter Blythe

DR. BLYTHE:- “Yes, God always sends the spring, thanks be.”

SUSAN:- “It is late this year, though. The daffodils are only peeping through.” *(To herself)* “How Walter loved daffodils!”

ANNE:- “I used to love winter—even through the last twenty years. And now I wonder how we could live through it if it were not for the hope of spring.”

DR. BLYTHE:- “Is life with me as hard as that, Anne-girl?”

SUSAN, *thinking*:- “The dear man *has* to have his joke.”

THE AFTERMATH

I

*Yesterday we were young who now are old ...
We fought hot-hearted under a sweet sky,
The lust of blood made even cowards bold,
And no one feared to die;
We were all drunken with a horrid joy,
We laughed as devils laugh from hell released,
And, when the moon rose redly in the east,
I killed a stripling boy!*

*He might have been my brother slim and fair ...
I killed him horribly and I was glad,
It pleased me much to see his dabbled hair,
The pale and pretty lad!
I waved my bayonet aloft in glee ...
He writhed there like a worm, and all around
Dead men were scattered o'er the reeking ground ...
Ours was the victory!*

II

*Now we are old who yesterday were young
And cannot see the beauty of the skies,
For we have gazed the pits of hell among
And they have scorched our eyes.
The dead are happier than we who live,
For, dying, they have purged their memory thus
And won forgetfulness; but what to us
Can such oblivion give?*

We must remember always; evermore

*Must spring be hateful and the dawn a shame ...
We shall not sleep as we have slept before
That withering blast of flame.
The wind has voices that may not be stilled ...
The wind that yester morning was so blithe ...
And everywhere I look I see him writhe,
That pretty boy I killed!*

Walter Blythe

This poem was written “somewhere in France” in the year of Courcellette and sent home to his mother with the rest of his papers. She has never read it to anyone but Jem Blythe who says,

“Walter never bayonnetted anyone, mother. But he saw ... he saw ...”

ANNE, *steadily*:- “I am thankful now, Jem, that Walter did not come back. He could never have lived with his memories ... and if he had seen the futility of the sacrifice they made then mirrored in this ghastly holocaust ...”

JEM, *thinking of Jem, Jr., and young Walter*:- “I know ... I know. Even I who am a tougher brand than Walter ... but let us talk of something else. Who was it said, ‘We forget because we must’? He was right.”

The End

AFTERWORD

by Benjamin Lefebvre

When I first travelled to the University of Guelph archives in 1999 to read L.M. Montgomery's typescript version of *The Blythes Are Quoted*, I had no way of knowing what literary discovery I was about to make. For a long time, I had taken for granted the reports of several commentators that *The Blythes Are Quoted* had been published in its entirety, minus a short introductory sketch, in 1974 as *The Road to Yesterday*. But then a colleague told me she had read Montgomery's typescript herself and found that there was much more missing from *The Road to Yesterday* than these reports suggested. She generously sent me her notes summarizing the missing parts and encouraged me to take a look for myself. When I did, I realized that quite substantial portions of *The Blythes Are Quoted* had been cut: not only had vignettes and poems amounting to almost a hundred pages of text been removed from between the short stories, but as I glanced through the stories themselves I found several sections that I did not recall from my reading of the abridged book. Surely, I thought, there was more here than met the eye. And then, as I sat at my desk in the middle of the sunny afternoon, the archivists wheeled out two more typescripts of *The Blythes Are Quoted*, each a substantially different version of the text. I began to wonder if I had stumbled upon buried treasure. It occurred to me that this late project, completed near the end of Montgomery's life in 1942, could change the way readers perceived the author and her work.

One of the first things to strike me as I read through the three typescripts of *The Blythes Are Quoted* was their overall tone and outlook,

which seemed completely unlike any of Montgomery's earlier work. Wearing a pair of white cotton gloves to help preserve the original documents, I made a list in my notebook of themes and topics that kept recurring: adultery, illegitimacy, despair, misogyny, murder, revenge, bitterness, hatred, aging, and death. Surely, I thought, these were not what most readers associated with L.M. Montgomery. And later, as I discussed what I had found with friends and colleagues, some of whom had only a passing familiarity with Montgomery's writing, the almost unanimous response I received was that I had stumbled upon a completely different work.

As the novelty wore off, however, I began to wonder if the change in tone and subject matter could really be that abrupt. I know of several individuals and groups who regularly read through all of Montgomery's books in chronological order, from *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) to *Anne of Ingleside* (1939), in an attempt to trace the ways in which the author's style and outlook evolve throughout her career. I have often done this myself, and with each rereading of these familiar texts I always see something new. When I first did so after several months of immersion in the pages of *The Blythes Are Quoted*, I noticed that the elements on my list began to emerge from the margins of the earlier books in ways I hadn't noticed before.

It is well known that Montgomery suffered from bouts of depression and despair throughout her adult life, but I was interested nevertheless when in September 2008 it was made public that she had died of a drug overdose that may have been deliberate. Montgomery's possible suicide has some bearing on *The Blythes Are Quoted*, particularly since her obituary in *The Globe and Mail* offers a tantalizing hint of the book's relationship to the end of her life. Noting on April 25, 1942, that Montgomery "died suddenly yesterday," the obituary continues: "For the past two years she had been in ill health, but during the past winter Mrs. Macdonald compiled a collection of magazine stories she had written many years ago, and these were placed in the hands of a publishing firm only yesterday." While the obituary does not shed light on whether Montgomery or someone else submitted this work to her publisher, the presence of a typescript and a carbon copy in the archives for McClelland and Stewart confirm that it arrived.

Readers who have enjoyed Montgomery's larger body of work—which includes twenty novels, over five hundred short stories, five hundred poems, ten volumes of journals, and numerous essays—will in fact recognize much that is familiar in this final book. It picks up familiar story patterns, such as orphans yearning for healthy homes, marriages culminating after years of delay, the creation of alternative families, and the resolution of past grievances and misunderstandings. As well, Montgomery returns to a series of debates that preoccupied her throughout her career: between romance and realism, individual and community, hope and hopelessness, harmony and conflict, order and chaos, memory and forgetting. Much like her protagonists, who walk the fine line between their ambitions and the expectations of their families and communities, Montgomery always strove for the happy medium between the stories she yearned to tell and the predictable packages that could contain them. Partly for these reasons, and partly because her own marriage was a disaster, many of her romantic resolutions appear unsatisfying to some readers. In *The Blythes Are Quoted*, she shifts the emphasis but retains the familiar format, reviving for a final experiment her best-known characters: Anne and Gilbert Blythe, their six children, housekeeper Susan Baker, and friends and neighbours in their community.

But while these elements are all familiar, what changes is the way these final stories are told. As the storms of the Second World War raged on, Montgomery returned, with this final sequel to *Anne of Green Gables*, to two conventions about which she had always been ambivalent: the romance plot and the book sequel. Montgomery had a love-hate relationship with both, feeling trapped by expectations she found both financially profitable and creatively stagnating. Although courtship and marriage are frequent themes in her work, she privately complained that she felt awkward writing about romance, preferring the humour to be found in stories concerning the young and old. She had difficulty bringing Anne's romance to a "proper" conclusion that would satisfy her readers, but six years after *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), she finally produced, at the insistence of her publisher, *Anne of the Island* (1915), in which Anne finally agrees to marry Gilbert Blythe.

While this resolution concluded Anne's romance plot, Montgomery seems to have found new life in her characters when she realized that their

popularity gave her an established audience for her most central preoccupation throughout this period: the Great War of 1914–1918. Montgomery agonized over the events of the war, living through them vicariously as they were described to her in the mainstream press. Although her next two novels are set several years earlier, they are written in wartime and address the worldwide conflict in indirect ways: *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), about the early years of Anne and Gilbert's marriage, culminates in the stillbirth of their daughter Joyce and the birth of their eldest son, Jem; and *Rainbow Valley* (1919), set thirteen years later, focuses on the Blythe children and their friends. Her next novel, *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921), revisits these characters as young adults and focuses on the impact that the Great War has on the lives of community members at home. This last book, in the planning stages as early as 1917, was not begun until four months after the Armistice was signed; as she drafted, Montgomery had full knowledge of the war's outcome along with the expectation of a new utopian world about to be born. Although the focus of this novel is on the women at the home front, with Rilla Blythe and maid-of-all-work Susan Baker representing two generations of women who had to adapt to a rapidly changing world, the book encompasses an entire generation of young men in Anne and Gilbert's son Walter, an aspiring poet who struggles to reconcile his love of beauty with his duty to serve his country. His death symbolizes the larger sacrifice made in defence of the British Empire, and his poem, "The Piper," circulates around the world as an inspiring message of courage and optimism in the face of terrifying chaos. Although readers of *Rilla of Ingleside* are offered only one phrase from this poem—the call to "keep faith," recalling John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields"—Walter Blythe's "The Piper" is the only war poem worth commemorating in Montgomery's depiction of these events.

Upon completing this second trilogy of Anne books in 1920, Montgomery recorded in her journal that she did not intend to pursue this series further. New projects beckoned to her, including a semi-autobiographical trilogy about a young girl, Emily Byrd Starr, who dreams of becoming a writer, and the plot of a more mature novel that would never materialize. But she continued to feel bound by the conventions that had made her earlier books such a success, and the economic chaos that

followed the stock market crash of 1929 made her resist straying too far from patterns that had already proven financially profitable. By the mid-1930s, once she began work on a novel that would fill the three-year gap between *Anne of the Island* and *Anne's House of Dreams*, the purpose that writing served for her had likewise evolved: although she returned to *Anne* partly to capitalize on the commercial success of a 1934 movie version of *Anne of Green Gables*, she also yearned for the security and the comfort that this series had always offered her. As a result, both *Anne of Windy Poplars* (1936) and *Anne of Ingleside* (1939) are largely episodic, filled with recycled plot elements that seem increasingly old-fashioned by this time. And yet in *Anne of Ingleside* we see Montgomery having difficulty maintaining the patterns for which she is best known: amusing anecdotes about Anne's young children experiencing disappointment and disillusion are juxtaposed with two storylines involving marital hatred and disintegration, including Anne's suspicion that Gilbert has lost interest in her. These suspicions are proven in the end to be unfounded, but many adult readers have found the happy ending to be unconvincing.

Sometime after *Anne of Ingleside* was published in 1939, Montgomery began work on the project that would become *The Blythes Are Quoted*. Its composition is a mystery; there is no mention of it anywhere in her surviving journals and correspondence, most of which had tapered off by this time. Apparently unable or unwilling to compose a full novel, Montgomery revised previously published short stories (as well as a few she had been unable to publish in their original form) to include mentions and appearances of the Blythe family and attributed forty-one of her own poems to Anne and to Walter. The short stories were fairly recent, having appeared throughout the 1930s in Canadian and American magazines such as *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, *Canadian Home Journal*, *Country Home*, and *Holland's, the Magazine of the South*, but the poems were from a wider span of her career, appearing first in *The Canadian Magazine*, *Canadian Bookman*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *The Commonweal*, *Saturday Night*, *Chatelaine*, and *Good Housekeeping*.*

In this final project, Montgomery stays within the patterns she and her readers are used to, but the outcomes no longer fit. Two stories focus on characters whose actions are driven by decades of bitterness, only to have the tables turned on them by circumstance. Three stories contain elaborate

deathbed scenes, and the plots of three more hinge on the ways that the death of an adult can manipulate the lives of younger people. For every worthy romantic prospect or responsible guardian in the lives of the main characters, there are close calls with additional characters who are brutish, controlling, selfish, and abusive. Moreover, poems that celebrate the safety of family and home are balanced by ones concerning jealousy between lovers, anguished yearning for the past, and personal failures. The book's unique structure creates a contrast between the short stories, which include numerous laudatory mentions of the Blythe family from the perspective of outsiders (and a few nasty comments as well), and the vignettes, which show that life at Ingleside is not always how it is perceived. And in dividing her book into two parts, with the Great War at its centre, Montgomery provided a further contrast, between the relatively peaceful pre-war period and the rapid changes that came in the war's aftermath.

*In rewriting stories set originally in the 1930s and situating them before the Great War, Montgomery inadvertently introduced a few anachronisms: in "An Afternoon with Mr. Jenkins," Timothy mentions that his father, who had been a soldier, was the recipient of "the Distinguished Service Medal," an honour only awarded in the Great War, and in "The Twins Pretend," Jill and P.G. enact the execution of Edith Cavell, a British nurse who would not be put to death until 1915 in Belgium. In the final story, "The Road to Yesterday," set during the Second World War, Susette and "Dick" reminisce about their childhood adventures with Anne and Gilbert's grandchildren, which is impossible in terms of the book's chronology.

Montgomery revised the continuity of the overall series by revealing for the first time that Anne has written occasional poems throughout her life. Readers who were disappointed that Anne's writing ambitions petered out in some of the later books will welcome this revision, especially given Anne's assertion that many of these were written at key moments in her life: "Grief," written as an echo to Matthew's death, which occurs in *Anne of Green Gables*; "Old Path Round the Shore" and "The Gate of Dream," written while she was a schoolteacher, in *Anne of Avonlea*; "Man and Woman," "Midsummer Day," and "Remembered," written while at

university, in *Anne of the Island*; and “Farewell to an Old Room,” written on the eve of her wedding day, in *Anne’s House of Dreams*. However, although Montgomery herself had published most of these poems in periodicals, there is no indication anywhere in this book that Anne succeeded in publishing any of them. As well, readers who applaud Anne when she breaks her slate over Gilbert’s head in *Anne of Green Gables* may be disappointed to read Gilbert’s version of these events so many years later, as revealed in their discussion of “Farewell to an Old Room”: “Your mother thought she had a grudge against me, but I always wanted to be friends.” Equally disappointing, of course, is the fact that Anne offers nothing in reply.

Finally, nowhere do we see Montgomery reconsidering her earlier work more than in her changed depiction of the Great War, which in *Rilla of Ingleside* had been celebrated as a necessary sacrifice for the sake of a peaceful future. This is most immediately apparent in Anne and Jem’s final discussion at the end of the book, but there are several additional clues as well: in the typescript that was used as the basis of this edition, Montgomery included the term “Great War” on the title page, but crossed out “Great” and added “First World” in ink, an admission that the new world she had once predicted would emerge out of the ashes of the Great War would not materialize after all. Part of this admission can also be found in the devastating battle staged in the poems at opposite ends of the book. Addressing her readers with the proviso that the full text of “The Piper” “seems even more appropriate now”—that is, in the dark days of the Second World War—“than then,” Montgomery begins the book with two stanzas that feel far more conflicted than the poem alluded to in *Rilla of Ingleside*. And yet “The Aftermath,” arranged to bring the story to a close, invites us to reconsider this ambivalence, perhaps to see a layer of despair that could otherwise be missed. The text of “The Aftermath,” written from the perspective of a soldier who wishes he had not survived the war, is a surprise to readers who remember the courage and nobility that Walter exhibited in *Rilla*. Montgomery proved highly ambivalent about this poem, crossing out the poem and the final dialogue in ink but saving the deleted pages for posterity. And although “The Piper” is attributed to Walter, Montgomery submitted it to *Saturday Night* magazine, with a nearly identical introductory note, three weeks before her

death. Published posthumously on May 2, 1942, it is Montgomery's final poem—it commemorates the end of her career and the end of her life.

While this final book certainly asks a lot of Montgomery's devoted readers, I am hopeful that these revisions and reconsiderations will add to her legacy rather than take anything away. This familiar and unfamiliar book may surprise as much as it delights, but beneath the moments of despair and regret, Montgomery's sense of humour, her uncanny ability to paint human interactions, and her compassion for people's failings all shine through.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

This edition is based on the last of three typescripts of *The Blythes Are Quoted* that are part of the L.M. Montgomery Collection, Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library. This typescript was among a larger file of papers that was sold to the University of Guelph by David Macdonald (son of Montgomery's eldest son, Chester) in 1984. Although none of the three typescripts is dated, copies of the final typescript are also part of the Jack McClelland fonds and the McClelland & Stewart fonds at McMaster University, confirming that the book was submitted to her Canadian publisher prior to Montgomery's death. I have corrected obvious typographical errors and restored words that were inadvertently dropped from the final typescript (using whenever possible the wording from an earlier typescript). I have regularized Montgomery's spelling and punctuation to make the text more readable. All ellipses are Montgomery's, and I have followed her instructions (sometimes handwritten) concerning the placement of occasional footnotes that refer to her earlier texts. I have added nothing to what Montgomery wrote, and I did not correct more substantial errors in the text, such as the claim that Anne and Gilbert have five children when they have six (in "Twilight in Ingleside"), the names Charlie Pye and Rosamond West, the phrase "score of imagination," and the consistent misspelling of Roy Gardner's surname. My goal throughout has been to offer as close a reproduction of Montgomery's text as possible. For more information about the individual short stories and poems in their original form, as well as further resources that pertain to this project and to Montgomery's legacy, please visit the L.M. Montgomery Research Group website at <http://lmmresearch.org>.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This edition of *The Blythes Are Quoted* is indebted to several friends and colleagues who supported the project in innumerable ways: Lorne Bruce, Donna Campbell, Mary Beth Cavert, Carolyn Strom Collins, Cecily Devereux, Elizabeth R. Epperly, Irene Gammel, Carole Gerson, Joshua Ginter, Maryam Haddad, Yuka Kajihara, Bernard Katz, Jennifer H. Litster, Andrea McKenzie, Jason Nolan, Donna Palmateer Pennee, Mavis Reimer, Laura Robinson, Mary Henley Rubio, Carl Spadoni, Meg Taylor, Elizabeth Waterston, Joanne E. Wood, Kate Wood, Christy Woster, Emily Woster, and Lorraine York. I also thank Ruth Macdonald, David Macdonald, Kate Macdonald Butler, Sally Keefe Cohen, and Marian Dingman Hebb at Heirs of

L.M. Montgomery, Helen Reeves and Alex Schultz at Penguin Canada and copyeditor Stephanie Fysh. I gratefully acknowledge doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and a Major Research Grant from the Office of the Vice-President (Research and Graduate Studies) at the University of Winnipeg. My special thanks go to Jacob Letkemann, Kelly Norah Drukker, Lisa Richter, James Buchanan, Melanie Lefebvre, Jeremy Lefebvre, Éric Lemay, and Julie Trépanier. I dedicate this book to my mother, Claire Pelland Lefebvre, and to the memory of my father, Gerald M. Lefebvre.

Books by L.M. Montgomery

THE ANNE BOOKS

Anne of Green Gables (1908)

Anne of Avonlea (1909)

Anne of the Island (1915)

Anne of Windy Poplars (1936)

Anne's House of Dreams (1917)

Anne of Ingleside (1939)

Rainbow Valley (1919)

Rilla of Ingleside (1921)

The Blythes Are Quoted, edited by Benjamin Lefebvre (2009)

Chronicles of Avonlea (1912)

Further Chronicles of Avonlea (1920)

THE EMILY BOOKS

Emily of New Moon (1923)

Emily Climbs (1925)

Emily's Quest (1927)

OTHER BOOKS

Kilmeny of the Orchard (1910)

The Story Girl (1911)

The Golden Road (1913)

The Blue Castle (1926)

Magic for Marigold (1929)

A Tangled Web (1931)

Pat of Silver Bush (1933)
Mistress Pat (1935)
Jane of Lantern Hill (1937)

COLLECTIONS OF POEMS

The Watchman and Other Poems (1916)
The Poetry of Lucy Maud Montgomery, selected by John Ferns and
Kevin McCabe (1987)

COLLECTIONS OF SHORT STORIES

The Road to Yesterday (1974)
The Doctor's Sweetheart and Other Stories, selected by Catherine
McLay (1979)
Akin to Anne: Tales of Other Orphans, edited by Rea Wilmshurst (1988)
Along the Shore: Tales by the Sea, edited by Rea Wilmshurst (1989)
Among the Shadows: Tales of the Darker Side, edited by Rea
Wilmshurst (1990)
After Many Days: Tales of Time Passed, edited by Rea Wilmshurst
(1991)
Against the Odds: Tales of Achievement, edited by Rea Wilmshurst
(1993)
At the Altar: Matrimonial Tales, edited by Rea Wilmshurst (1994)
Across the Miles: Tales of Correspondence, edited by Rea Wilmshurst
(1995)
Christmas with Anne and Other Holiday Stories, edited by Rea
Wilmshurst (1995)

LIFE WRITING

The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career (1917/1975)

Courageous Women, with Marian Keith and Mabel Burns McKinley
(1934)

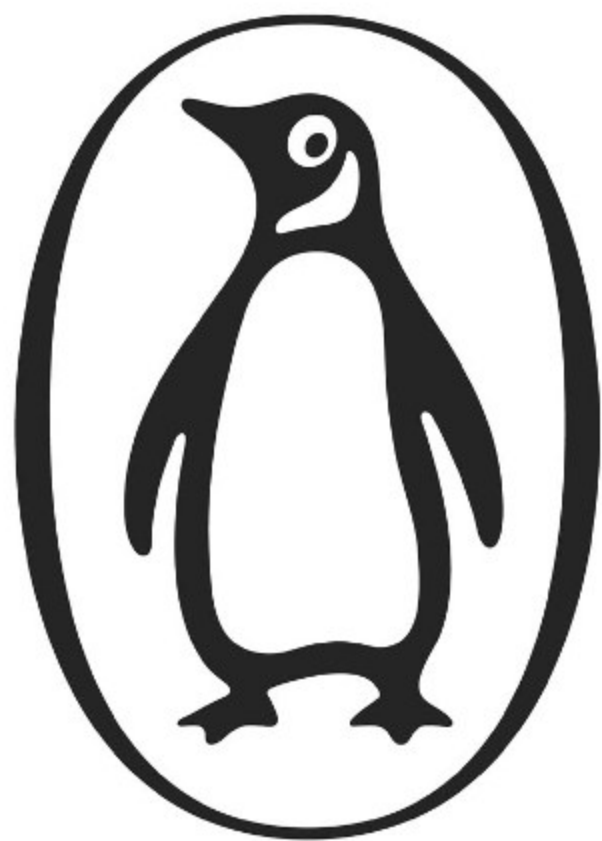
*The Green Gables Letters from L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber,
1905–1909*, edited by Wilfrid Eggleston (1960)

My Dear Mr. M.: Letters to G.B. MacMillan from L.M. Montgomery,
edited by Francis W.P. Bolger and Elizabeth R. Epperly (1980)

The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery (5 vols.), edited by Mary
Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston (1985–2004)

*After Green Gables: L.M. Montgomery's Letters to Ephraim Weber,
1916–1941*, edited by Hildi Froese Tiessen and Paul Gerard Tiessen
(2006)

Imagining Anne: The Island Scrapbooks of L.M. Montgomery, by
Elizabeth Rollins Epperly (2008)



PENGUIN
CANADA